Gay Men Have Higher Meningitis Risk, Especially if They Have HIV

New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago have had clusters of the potentially fatal, vaccine-preventable meningococcal disease.

June 20, 2017

Compared with the general population, men who have sex with men (MSM) are at higher risk of meningococcal disease, in particular if they have HIV, aidsmap reports.

The recent reported cases of this potentially fatal bacterial infection are small in number but serious enough to warrant a recommendation for MSM and HIV-positive people to get vaccinated.

Publishing their findings in Clinical Infectious Diseases, researchers analyzed data from the National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System on all reported cases of infection with Neisseria meningitidis among men 18 to 64 years from 2012 to 2015.

Out of 527 identified cases, 74 (14 percent) were among MSM. Sixty-three percent of the cases among MSM occurred in New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago. Of the 64 MSM about whom there were data on their HIV status, 38 (59 percent) were living with the virus.

These figures meant that the annual rate of meningococcal disease among MSM in the United States was an estimated 0.56 cases per 100,000 MSM, compared with 0.14 among the non-MSM male population. The study authors calculated that compared with non-MSM males, MSM are four times more likely and HIV-positive MSM are 10.1 times more likely to contract the infection.

To read the aidsmap article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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