# New Ways to Beat Gonorrhea

September 25, 2013 By Benjamin Ryan

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have announced that two new antibiotic regimens are highly effective at treating gonorrhea. The sexually transmitted infection (STI) has developed resistance to nearly all the current arsenal of treatments. Participants in the clinical trials of the new antibiotics reported significant side effects, most notably gastrointestinal problems, so the CDC is not currently changing its treatment guidelines for the STI.

Gonorrhea and other STIs facilitate the spread of HIV by increasing viral load and by increasing the presence of cells that HIV targets.

In a Phase IV clinical trial, a combo of injectable gentamicin and oral azithromycin was 100 percent effective at curbing gonorrhea, and oral gemifloxacin with azithromycin was 99.5 percent effective.

Of those taking the first combo, 28 percent experienced nausea, 19 percent diarrhea and 7 percent either abdominal discomfort or vomiting. Of those taking the latter combo, 37 percent experienced nausea, 23 percent diarrhea and 11 percent abdominal discomfort.

Robert Kirkcaldy, MD, MPH, a medical epidemiologist at the CDC's Division of STD Prevention, says that while the new drug options "do provide some hope against drug-resistant gonorrhea, they really don't address the urgent needs for additional first-line treatments that are safe and well-tolerated." The CDC and NIH are working to find new solutions and are encouraging further research.

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