

Investigational Antibiotic Beats Genital and Rectal Gonorrhea

The CDC has issued increasingly urgent warnings about the possible emergence of drug-resistant strains of the STI.

November 21, 2018 By [Benjamin Ryan](#)

A small study of an investigational antibiotic has given hope to the effort to find [new treatments](#) for gonorrhea as signs increasingly [indicate](#) that highly drug-resistant strains of the sexually transmitted infection (STI) may soon emerge, MedPage Today reports. The treatment was not very successful at clearing throat infections, however.

Publishing their findings in The New England Journal of Medicine, researchers conducted an open-label Phase II study of 179 people, including 167 men and 12 women, who received the experimental antibiotic, called zoliflodacin, or the current standard treatment for gonorrhea, ceftriaxone.

The participants were eligible for the study if they were between 18 and 55 years old, had signs and symptoms of what is known as urogenital gonorrhea, an untreated case of diagnosed urogenital gonorrhea or sexual contact with a partner with gonorrhea during the previous two weeks.

The participants were randomized by a ratio of seven to seven to four to receive a single oral dose of 2 grams or 3 g of zoliflodacin, or one 500-milligram dose of ceftriaxone injected into the muscle.

Thirty-eight of the participants tested negative for gonorrhea and were excluded from the analysis of the treatment's efficacy. Fifty-seven participants received 2 g of zoliflodacin and 56 received the 3-g dose; 28 people received ceftriaxone.

Among the participants included in the final analysis, there were 141 cases of urethral or cervical gonorrhea, 23 cases of pharyngeal (the throat area) infection and 15 cases of rectal infection.

Of those who had urogenital infections, a respective 55 of 57 (96.5 percent) and 54 of 56 (96.4 percent) of those in the 2-g and 3-g zoliflodacin groups were cured of gonorrhea; all 28 of those in the ceftriaxone group were cured. Of those with pharyngeal infections, a respective four of eight (50 percent) and nine of 11 (81.8 percent) of those in the 2-g and 3-g zoliflodacin groups were cured; all four of those in the ceftriaxone group were cured.

All 15 rectal infections were cured, regardless of the treatment.

Eighty-four participants experienced adverse health events, including a respective 24 and 37 in the 2-g and 3-g zoliflodacin groups and 23 in the ceftriaxone group. The adverse events of 21 people were deemed associated with zoliflodacin; most involved gastrointestinal problems that subsided on their own.

To read the MedPage Today article, [click here](#).

To read the study abstract, [click here](#).

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

<http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/investigational-antibiotic-beats-genital-rectal-gonorrhea>