



CDC: Rebirth of Deadly Syphilis in Gay Men

By GayWebMonkey.com

Over the past few years, US Health officials have detected a serious strain of the sexually transmitted bacterial disease syphilis in gay and bisexual US men infected with the AIDS virus. The strain had been all but wiped out decades ago, but the CDC is indicating that gay and bisexual men are the primary cause of the rebirth of syphilis in the past few years.

Symptomatic early neurosyphilis is a rare manifestation of syphilis that usually occurs within the first 12 months of infection, and although syphilis is treatable with antibiotics, this form can be deadly leading to blindness, and possible stroke.

Over the last decade the rate of syphilis has been on a steady increase in the United States. While gay and bisexual men only accounted for 7 percent of all the syphilis cases in 2000, that percentage increased in an alarming rate to more than 60 percent in 2005. Symptomatic early neurosyphilis disappeared in the United States after the introduction of penicillin treatment in the late 1940s but reappeared in the 1980s among persons with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.

The CDC tracked and monitored 49 new cases of people infected with the rare form of syphilis. All of those were HIV positive men in Los Angeles, Chicago, San Diego, and New York. Researchers say that lack of safe sex is the principle cause of the new outbreaks.

"These are primarily infections that people are probably getting because they're not using condoms," said Dr. Thomas Peterman of the CDC's Division of STD Prevention who authored of the report.

Peterman explained to Reuters that many HIV positive men were under the attitude that they no longer needed to have safe sex practices. That misunderstanding will no doubt lead to future infestations and more breakouts of the disease.

Men with syphilis have a far more likely chance of transmitting or receiving HIV through unprotected sex. Health officials encourages everyone, but especially men who have sex with men to get tested every 6 months for HIV and other STD's to help stop the spread.

Written By Dylan Vox