Carole Beighton,
Senior Research Fellow, St George's,
University of London.

Derek G Cook
Professor of Epidemiology, St George's,
University of London

REFERENCES

1. Carey IM, Shah SM, Hosking FJ, *et al*. Health characteristics and consultation patterns of people with intellectual disability: a cross-sectional database study in English general practice. *Br J Gen Pract* 2016; DOI: 10.3399/bjgp16X684301. <http://bjgp.org/content/66/645/e264>.
2. Emerson E, Glover G. The 'transition cliff' in the administrative prevalence of learning disabilities in England. *Tizard Learn Disabil Rev* 2012; **17**(3): 139–143.
3. Public Health England. *People with learning disabilities in England 2013*. London: PHE, 2014. <http://www.improvinghealthandlives.org.uk/gsf.php5?f=313502&iv=21008> [accessed 7 Jun 2016].
4. Maulik PK, Mascarenhas MN, Mathers CD, *et al*. Prevalence of intellectual disability: a meta-analysis of population-based studies. *Res Dev Disabil* 2011; **32**(2): 419–436.
5. Cooper SA, McLean G, Guthrie B, *et al*. Multiple physical and mental health comorbidity in adults with intellectual disabilities: population-based cross-sectional analysis. *BMC Fam Pract* 2015; **16**: 11.
6. Health and Social Care Information Centre. Quality and Outcomes Framework. 2016; <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/qof> [accessed 7 Jun 2016].
7. Glover G, Emerson E. Have you got a learning disability? Asking the question and recording the answer for NHS healthcare providers. Improving Health and Lives: Learning Disabilities Observatory, 2012. https://www.improvinghealthandlives.org.uk/securefiles/160609_1120/1HAL2012-08%20AskingTheQuestion.pdf [accessed 7 Jun 2016].

DOI: 10.3399/bjgp16X685861

Poor adherence to gonorrhoea treatment guidelines in general practice in England

Gonorrhoea diagnoses are on the increase in England and a cluster of high-level azithromycin resistance was detected in 2015.^{1,2} Treatment options are limited and, in response to emerging antimicrobial resistance, treatment guidelines have changed twice since 2004.^{3,4} Current recommended treatment for gonorrhoea is dual therapy with 500 mg ceftriaxone (intramuscularly) and 1 g azithromycin

(orally).³ Following a diagnosis of gonorrhoea in general practice, referral to specialist sexual health services for treatment, test of cure, partner notification, further STI testing and culture for antimicrobial susceptibility testing is recommended.⁵

Here, we report the results of an analysis of data from GPs in England from the Clinical Practice Research Datalink, an anonymised extract of visits to a sample of GPs whose patients are representative of the UK population.⁶ As the treatment guidelines were last updated in 2011,³ we focus on the gonorrhoea diagnoses reported from 2011–2014. During this time, an estimated 4150 gonorrhoea diagnoses were made by GPs in England, representing 4% of the total number of diagnoses made in all clinical settings reporting data (GPs and specialist sexual health clinics).

The proportion of cases treated each year by GPs fluctuated between 50–52% ($P=0.729$). Among those treated, the proportion given the recommended dual therapy ranged from 11–5% (2011–2014; $P=0.488$). Most cases were prescribed antibiotics no longer recommended for the treatment of gonorrhoea. From 2011–2014, the proportion of gonorrhoea diagnoses for which penicillins were prescribed fluctuated between 15–20% ($P=0.729$), whereas that of ciprofloxacin and azithromycin monotherapy ranged from 15–5% ($P=0.166$) and 7–30% ($P=0.166$), respectively.

These findings are consistent with trends reported prior to the most recent change in treatment guideline in 2011.⁷ Although GPs diagnose fewer cases of gonorrhoea than specialist clinics, they make an important contribution to the management of this infection and there is a need to raise awareness of current treatment guidelines among them; this has recently been highlighted in a letter from England's Chief Medical Officer to GPs.⁸ Prompt and correct treatment of gonorrhoea is required to prevent treatment failure, onward transmission, and the further emergence of antimicrobial resistance.

Hamish Mohammed,
HIV and STI Department, National Infection Service, Public Health England.
E-mail: hamish.mohammed@phe.gov.uk

Bersabeh Sile,
HIV and STI Department, National Infection Service, Public Health England.

Martina Furegato,
HIV and STI Department, National Infection

Service, Public Health England.

Helen Fifer,
HIV and STI Department, National Infection Service, Public Health England.

Gwenda Hughes,
HIV and STI Department, National Infection Service, Public Health England.

REFERENCES

1. Mohammed H, Mitchell H, Sile B, *et al*. Increase in sexually transmitted infections among men who have sex with men, England, 2014. *Emerg Infect Dis* 2016; **22**(11): 88–91.
2. Public Health England. Surveillance of antimicrobial resistance in *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. *Health Protection Report* 2015; **9**(41): news (20 Nov).
3. Bignell C, Fitzgerald M; Guideline Development Group; British Association for Sexual Health and HIV UK. UK national guideline for the management of gonorrhoea in adults, 2011. *Int J STD AIDS* 2011; **22**(10): 541–547.
4. British Association for Sexual Health and HIV. *National guideline on the diagnosis and treatment of gonorrhoea in adults*. Macclesfield: BASHH, 2005. <http://www.bashh.org/documents/116/116.pdf> [accessed 7 Jun 2016].
5. Royal College of General Practitioners, British Association for Sexual Health and HIV. *Sexually transmitted infections in primary care 2013*. 2nd edn. Macclesfield: BASHH, 2013. http://www.bashh.org/BASHH/BASHH_Groups/BASHH_Primary_Care_Group/BASHH/BASHH_Groups/BASHH_Primary_Care_Group.aspx?hkey=1e5feacc-198d-4516-8277-3dc51ade47e8 [accessed 7 Jun 2016].
6. Williams T, van Staa T, Puri S, Eaton S. Recent advances in the utility and use of the General Practice Research Database as an example of a UK primary care data resource. *Ther Adv Drug Saf* 2012; **3**(2): 89–99.
7. Wetten S, Mohammed H, Yung M, *et al*. Diagnosis and treatment of chlamydia and gonorrhoea in general practice in England 2000–2011: a population-based study using data from the UK Clinical Practice Research Datalink. *BMJ Open* 2015; **5**(5): e007776.
8. British Association for Sexual Health and HIV. Chief Medical Officer/Chief Pharmaceutical Officer letter on antimicrobial resistance and gonorrhoea. 2015. http://www.bashh.org/BASHH/News/News_Items/Chief_Medical_Officer_Chief_Pharmaceutical_Officer_Letter_on_antimicrobial_resistance_and_gonorrhoea.aspx [accessed 7 Jun 2016].

DOI: 10.3399/bjgp16X686077

Correction

In the February 2016 article by Elsey H *et al*. Green fingers and clear minds: prescribing 'care farming' for mental illness. *Br J Gen Pract* 2016; DOI: 10.3399/bjgp16X683749, the third author's name was incorrectly spelled with a 'y'. Her name is 'Rachel Bragg'. This has been corrected in the online version.

DOI: 10.3399/bjgp16X685585