

New Zealand Paediatric Surveillance Unit

CONGENITAL SYPHILIS PROTOCOL

Summary

The World Health Organization (WHO) is committed to eliminating congenital syphilis globally. The WHO has set an overall goal in relation to elimination of congenital syphilis as 'reduction of incidence to 0.5 cases or less per 1000 live births.' The specific clinical management targets necessary to achieve this goal are: 95% of pregnant women to be screened for syphilis; and $\geq 95\%$ of syphilis-seropositive pregnant women to receive appropriate treatment.

Syphilis is a notifiable infectious disease in New Zealand. New Zealand surveillance data show increasing notification rates for syphilis. Over 95% of notified cases are of males; however there have been notifications of women in the child-bearing age group. It has been noted that increasing rates of infectious syphilis in Northern Australia have correlated with increased notifications of congenital syphilis in the same area. Thus, in New Zealand, we are currently in the ideal position to collect baseline incidence data, and identify any early increase in the congenital syphilis cases, should they occur.

A diagnosis of syphilis requires a seropositive treponemal specific test (e.g. Treponema pallidum immunoassays) AND direct demonstration of Treponema pallidum in body specimens. It is expected that any child born to a woman who is seropositive on a treponemal specific test (with or without direct demonstration of Treponema pallidum in body specimens) will be referred for paediatric review, to identify or exclude a diagnosis of congenital syphilis.

CASE DEFINITION AND REPORTING INSTRUCTIONS

Any child born to a mother with positive syphilis serology and also any child aged < 12 years with a 'confirmed' or 'probable' diagnosis of congenital syphilis.

Please report any patients who you have seen in the last month and that you have not previously reported to NZPSU. Report through our monthly reporting surveys or via email to nzpsu@otago.ac.nz.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT

**THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEILLANCE WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE ANNUAL
REPORT OF THE NZPSU WHICH WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE NZPSU WEBSITE
AND CAN BE REQUESTED DIRECTLY FROM NZPSU**

REFERENCES

The World Health Organization (2012). Investment case for eliminating mother-to-child transmission of syphilis: promoting better maternal and child health and stronger health systems; 2012. Available at <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/rtis/9789241504348/en/index.html>
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