

## Oropharyngeal Gonorrhea During Pregnancy

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**OBJECTIVE:** To compare the prevalence of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* infections in a prenatal population of U. S. military dependents to a prenatal population of Thai civilian and a non-pregnant population of female military dependents.

**BACKGROUND:** *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* was isolated in 16% of 150 pregnant U.S. military dependents (1). Of the 24 positive cultures 23 were obtained from the oropharynx. In view of this finding it was felt that similar studies of Thai prenatal patients and non-pregnant U.S. military dependents should be performed.

**DESCRIPTION:** Identical techniques to those previously described (1) were employed to obtain specimens from prenatal patients attending the Obstetrics Outpatient Clinic of Women's Hospital, Bangkok, Thailand during the first three months of 1974. A culture of the oropharynx was obtained from all females between the ages of 15 and 24 years who attended the U. S. Army Dental Clinic, Bangkok from 1 January 1974 to 30 March 1974. *N. gonorrhoeae* was isolated and confirmed by methods discussed previously (1).

**PROGRESS:** Positive cultures were obtained in 19 of 160 (11.9%) Thai patients attending Women's Hospital. No positive cultures were obtained from the oropharynx in this group. Two of 114 patients (1.8%) attending the Dental Clinic had the gonococcus cultured from their oropharynx.

**DISCUSSION:** No oropharyngeal infections were found in the patients attending the prenatal clinic of Women's Hospital. These patients were predominately housewives and did not admit to the practice of fellatio. The practice of fellatio is not generally accepted in the culture of Thailand; therefore, one would not expect to routinely find the infection in the oropharynx if the mode of transmission is primarily genital to oral.

The fact that oropharyngeal infections of *N. gonorrhoeae* were detected in women visiting a dental clinic on a routine visit suggests the possibility of this being a means of identifying asymptomatic infections. The low proportion of positive subjects may partially be attributed to a slightly different subject population in this group when compared to the other two groups. None of the single women admitted to sexual activity, and although the older patients (35 and over) were still capable of childbearing, it is possible that they had reached an age where the mental attitude, in general, is toward not bearing children, particularly if they are multiparous. Because of this possible change in attitude, the exposure of older women may be less frequent and of a different nature than may occur in the younger age group. Another possible cause for the observed difference between the two U. S. military dependent groups may be related to dental care. Many individuals may have brushed their teeth or used some form of cleanser for their mouth and throat just prior to the sample being taken, thereby making the organism more difficult to recover for culture purposes.

### REFERENCES:

1. Spence, M. R. , Stutz, D. R. , Duangmanl, C. : SEATO Medical Research Laboratory Annual Report, 1973-74.