



COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on Sexually Transmitted Infection Testing in a College Setting

Impacto de la pandemia de COVID-19 en las pruebas de infecciones de transmisión sexual en un entorno universitario

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Abstract

Introduction: COVID-19 pandemic has had a great impact on health systems. Many non-urgent visits were done virtually to limit exposure risks. **Objective:** Assess the impact of the pandemic on STI (sexually transmitted infections) testing in a college health setting. **Material and methods:** Quantitative assessment of the number of STI tests done, positive rates and percentage of “compliance to follow-up” for diagnosed STI from March to December 2020 and its comparison with historical data (2015-2019) at the University Health Services, UW-Madison. **Measurement:** Observed (2020) vs expected (2015-2019) number of STI tests, positive rates and compliance to follow-up testing for STIs. **Results:** The 2020 period showed a significant decrease in the number of tests done and an increase of positive rate when compared to historical data for total sample and per sex. There was a decrease in the percentage of follow-up for the entire sample and for females and an increase for males. **Conclusions:** In accordance with national data, our analysis shows significant declines in STI testing and follow-up during 2020 compared to previous years and an increase in positivity rate. A higher positivity with lower number of tests is likely due to triaging patients, facilitating testing for those at highest risk.

Keywords: Sexually Transmitted Infections; student health services; COVID-19 Pandemic. (Source: DeCS, Bireme).

Resumen

Introducción: La pandemia de COVID-19 ha tenido un gran impacto en los sistemas de salud. Muchas citas no urgentes se hicieron virtualmente para limitar riesgos de exposición. **Objetivo:** Evaluar el impacto de la pandemia en las pruebas para infecciones de transmisión sexual en servicios de salud universitarios. **Materiales y métodos:** Estudio cuantitativo del número de pruebas de infecciones de transmisión sexual realizadas, tasas de positividad y porcentaje de “cumplimiento de seguimiento” en el diagnóstico, desde marzo a diciembre del 2020 y su comparación con datos históricos (2015-2019) en los Servicios de Salud de UW-Madison. **Resultados:** Se encontró una reducción significativa en el número de pruebas realizadas y aumento de la tasa positiva, comparado con datos históricos para la muestra total y por sexo. Hubo disminución en el porcentaje de seguimiento para toda la muestra y para mujeres, y un incremento para hombres. **Conclusiones:** El análisis muestra reducciones significativas en pruebas para infecciones de transmisión sexual y seguimiento durante 2020, comparado con años anteriores y un incremento en la tasa de positividad. El hallazgo de una mayor positividad con un bajo número de pruebas se debe probablemente a la clasificación de los pacientes, facilitando así pruebas en aquellos con mayor riesgo.

Palabras clave: Infecciones de transmisión sexual; servicios de salud estudiantil; pandemia por COVID-19. (Fuente: DeCS, Bireme).

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