LGV: An old infection resurges

Uncommon in the past decade, a sexually transmitted disease called LGV (lymphogranuloma venereum) has reappeared in Western Europe, the United States and, now, according to anecdotal reports from several physicians, Canada as well. All the cases so far have been among gay or bisexual men, many of whom are also HIV positive.

The current outbreak of this bacterial infection appears to have begun in 2003 in the Netherlands. Initially, some cases of LGV may have been confused with other conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease. This may have happened because nowadays this infection is relatively uncommon and, in the current outbreak, symptoms of LGV were somewhat different from what they were in the past. However, as more cases emerged, doctors made the correct diagnosis with the help of sophisticated laboratory testing.

In this issue of TreatmentUpdate we present findings from doctors in the Netherlands, where there is an outbreak of LGV, with about 100 cases now being reported. We also summarize key features of the infection as well as its treatment. In the age of hi-tech tests such as PCR (polymerase chain reaction) and effective treatments for LGV, many questions about the current outbreak need to be answered. We highlight future directions for LGV research.
Decisions about particular medical treatments should always be made in consultation with a qualified medical practitioner knowledgeable about HIV- and hepatitis C-related illness and the treatments in question.

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Production of this content has been made possible through a financial contribution from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

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