Understanding Barriers to Conducting Sexual History Interviews During Enteric Disease Investigations

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Indiana State Department of Health
Background

Source: World Health Organization
Background

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Background

“Certain sexual activities put individuals at high risk of receiving/transmitting [enteric condition]. It is important to capture this information to understand both the rates of foodborne and sexually transmitted [enteric condition] in Indiana.”

Hepatitis A

What is the sexual preference of the patient?:
Note: If unknown enter -999.

How many male sex partners did the patient have?:
How many female sex partners did the patient have?:

Regardless of patient's gender, list number of sexual partners

Have sexual contact?: Yes
Male:
Female:
No Sexual Partners:
Sexual History Unknown:
Purpose

1. Assess knowledge of enteric disease transmission through sexual activity

2. Identify barriers to asking patients about their sexual history during interviews
Methods

The enteric team for the Epidemiology Resource Center at Indiana State Department of Health would like feedback regarding foodborne/waterborne investigations. Your responses will help us improve the case investigation process.

1. In which county do you work?
   - [ ]
   - Other (please specify)

2. What is your position/title?
   - [ ]

* 3. Which of the following diseases are you responsible for completing case investigations? Check all that apply.
   - [ ] Hepatitis A
   - [ ] Shigellosis
   - [ ] Cryptosporidiosis
   - [ ] Giardiasis
   - [ ] None of the above
4. In your opinion, is there a benefit to asking about a patient’s sexual history during a gastrointestinal illness case investigation?

- Yes
- No

5. Do you currently ask about patient’s sexual history during case investigations for hepatitis A, shigellosis, cryptosporidiosis, and/or giardiasis?

- Yes
- No

6. Which of the following sexual practices have a risk of transmitting gastrointestinal illness?

- Oral sex
- Anal sex
- Vaginal sex

7. What barriers do you encounter when approaching the topic of a patient’s sexual history? Check all that apply.

- Uncomfortable asking number of sexual partners
- Uncomfortable asking gender of sexual partners
- Patient is not forthcoming
- Lack of time
- Health department policy to not ask
- Doesn't seem relevant

Other (please specify)

[Box for additional comments]
Methods

Epidemiology Resource Center (ERC) enteric team administered a survey to local health department staff.

Public Health Nurse Conference
• May 8-9, 2019

Survey Deadline
• May 31, 2019

Emailed Survey
• May 15, 2019
Methods

• Survey was administered electronically through SurveyMonkey

• Total of 92 responses from 47 reported counties

• Survey data was numerically coded and entered into statistical software for data analysis
Exclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exclusion Criteria</th>
<th>Number Excluded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duplicate</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not complete enteric investigations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank Responses</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
51 Responses
39 Counties
Results

- More than two-thirds of respondents report completing case investigations for all 4 conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cryptosporidiosis</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giardiasis</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shigellosis</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In your opinion, is there a benefit to asking about a patient's sexual history during a gastrointestinal illness case investigation?

Results

41% Yes
59% No
Results

Do you currently ask about patient's sexual history during case investigations for hepatitis A, shigellosis, cryptosporidiosis, and/or giardiasis?

- **Yes** 80%
- **No** 16%
- **No Response** 4%
Results

Respondents selected types of sexual activity that pose a risk of transmitting GI illness

- Anal Sex: 84.3%
- Oral Sex: 70.6%
- Vaginal Sex: 29.4%
Results

Sexual History Question Barriers

Percentage of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Reported Barriers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

Sexual History Question Barriers

- Patient is not forthcoming: 74.5%
- Uncomfortable asking number of partners: 47.1%
- Uncomfortable asking gender of partners: 45.1%
- Doesn't seem relevant: 17.6%
- Lack of time: 11.8%
- Health department policy to not ask: 3.9%

Percentage of Respondents
Conclusion

• Though only about half of respondents think obtaining sexual history is beneficial, 80% report asking during a case investigation.

• Almost all investigators report at least one barrier during interviews.
Next Steps

• Provide additional education on sexually-transmitted enteric infections
  • MSM-specific considerations

• Identify resources to address patient discomfort
Questions?
References


Contact Information

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