

NON-GONOCOCCAL URETHRITIS (NGU)

REPORTING INFORMATION

NGU is not reportable as a separate entity. It is reportable only when *C. trachomatis* is identified, in which case it should be reported as a [Chlamydia infection](#).

AGENTS

Multiple. A majority of men with NGU have *C. trachomatis*, *Ureaplasma urealyticum*, or a host of other transmissible agents such as *Trichomonas vaginalis*, *Candida albicans*, and *Herpes simplex virus*.

CASE DEFINITION

Clinical description

Urethral inflammation that is not the result of infection with *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. Urethral inflammation may be diagnosed by the presence of one of the following criteria:

- A visible abnormal urethral discharge, or
- A positive leukocyte esterase test from a male aged <60 years who does not have a history of kidney disease or bladder infection, prostate enlargement, urogenital anatomic anomaly, or recent urinary tract instrumentation, or
- Microscopic evidence of urethritis (≥ 5 white blood cells per high-power field) on a Gram stain of a urethral smear.

Laboratory criteria for diagnosis

No evidence of *N. gonorrhoeae* infection by culture, Gram stain, or antigen or nucleic acid detection

Case classification

Confirmed: A clinically compatible case in a male in whom gonorrhea is not found, either by culture, Gram stain, or antigen or nucleic acid detection

Comment

Nongonococcal urethritis (NGU) is a clinical diagnosis of exclusion. The syndrome may result from infection with any of several agents (see [Chlamydia trachomatis](#), [Genital infection](#)). If gonorrhea and chlamydia are excluded, a clinically compatible illness should be classified as NGU. An illness in a male that meets the case definition of NGU and *C. trachomatis* infection should be classified as chlamydia.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Men usually have dysuria, frequency, and mucoid to purulent discharge. Some men have asymptomatic infections, but the characteristic physical finding is urethral discharge.

DIAGNOSIS

See case definition.

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Source

Humans, sexually transmitted in most cases.

Occurrence

When gonococcal infection is excluded, the cause of NGU will usually fall under one of the following:

<i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i>	30% - 50%
<i>Ureaplasma urealyticum</i>	10% - 40%
Other	20% - 30%

In the United States, NGU is more frequent than gonorrhea. On college campuses, more than 85% of urethritis is nongonococcal. The peak age group affected is 20-24 years, followed by 15-17 years, and then by the 25-29 year old group.

Mode of Transmission

Transmission is usually through sexual contact in most instances. The proportion of cases of NGU that are nonsexually transmitted has not been defined. There is no proof that masturbation, alcohol, too little or too much sexual activity, or eating certain foods will result in urethritis.

Incubation Period

Incubation is generally 1 to 3 weeks.

PUBLIC HEALTH MANAGEMENT**Case**Treatment

Consult the most recent CDC-published "STD Treatment Guidelines" (currently *MMWR* 1998;47[RR-1]) for recommended therapy. Copies of the guidelines are available from the [HIV/STD Prevention offices](#) and on the Internet at the CDC Web Site (www.cdc.gov).

Contacts

Every attempt should be made to treat the patient's sex partners. It has not been clearly demonstrated that treatment of the partner lowers the rate of recurrence in male partners, but female partners need treatment for their own benefit.