

Acceptability of new approach of syphilis management among Bateq aborigines in Kuala Koh, Gua Musang

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Syphilis is common among the Bateq aborigines in Gua Musang district. Socioeconomic structure and cultural factors determine the prevalence of syphilis in this community. This study aims to describe the prevalence of syphilis and sociodemographic characteristics of Bateq aborigines tested syphilis positive in Kuala Koh, Gua Musang. It also demonstrates acceptability of a new approach of syphilis management among the aboriginal community. **Materials and Methods:** It was a retrospective cohort study involving 247 residents of Bateq aborigines. Secondary data was collected using STD/Ver1/2011 Investigation Form from Centre for Disease Control Unit, Gua Musang. Descriptive statistical analyses were performed using Microsoft Excel 2019. **Results:** About 40.0% of the residents were tested positive for syphilis in a period of 10 years. Most of them were aged 21 to 30 years old and 54.0% were females. Sexual promiscuity (80.8%) was an important cause for the spread of syphilis. The new approach suggests that the syphilis rapid test kit (RTK) is able to provide quicker results compared to blood VDRL/TPHA test. A single, 2-g oral dose of azithromycin is an alternative to a 2.4-MU intramuscular dose of penicillin G benzathine in the treatment of syphilis. The overall acceptability rate of the new approach of syphilis treatment was 65.7%. The major perceived strengths for were quicker and easier RTK screening tests and painless syphilis treatment. **Conclusion:** The acceptability noticed in this study is rather high. Having benefits on quicker RTK screening test and painless oral treatment were found to be important predictors of acceptability of new approach of syphilis management. Hence, this new approach should be continuously in place to facilitate syphilis early detection and prompt treatment to reduce the transmission among the aboriginal community.