

SEX, SUN, SEA, AND STIs: SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS ACQUIRED ON HOLIDAY

HIV 2 influenced the European Cup!

This article summarizes excellently the consequences of unprotected sexual relationships on holiday and gives realistic plans for the generalist to follow in cases of possible STI exposure on holiday. It recommends that if patients are symptomatic a polymerase chain reaction test should be performed if an HIV seroconversion illness is suspected. I think that it should be added that this is currently only practically possible in the UK for suspected HIV 1 seroconversion. There is not a readily available test in the clinical setting for HIV 2 in the UK. This is usually not an issue as the vast majority of HIV in the world is HIV 1 other than in West Africa. In patients returning from holiday there the usually available PCR is not a useful test as it is a test for HIV 1. The only European country where this is a consistent issue is Portugal. The HIV 2 rate of infection has been given as 13% of all HIV positive STD patients and 29% of all HIV positive TB patients. (www. Eurosurveillance.org: "Prevalence of HIV 2 infection in Europe"; Volume 1 March 1996 p 21-23) This was an issue for English football fans returning from the European Football Cup in Portugal who believed that they were unwell with an HIV related infection. As the frequency of HIV 2 increases in Europe (although there are many reasons why this may not be so (www. aidsmap.com)) this will be an increasing problem unless clinicians have access to a readily available PCR for HIV 2.

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