

PRESENT PATTERN OF EARLY SYPHILIS IN THE MANCHESTER REGION *

II. IMPORTED INFECTION AND THE PROSTITUTE

BY

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A previous paper (Laird, 1957) described the significant social, economic, and geographic features of the area served by the Manchester Regional Hospital Board, and showed that, by 1956, infectious syphilis had ceased to be endemic in this area. The occasional sporadic case might produce a few secondary cases amongst the sexual contacts, but these minor outbreaks had occurred in the smaller towns of the region and not in the City of Manchester. Thus in 1956, for the first time, the number of cases of early infectious syphilis seen in the smaller towns of the region greatly exceeded those seen in Manchester itself, and this new pattern has been repeated during the first three quarters of 1957. The importation of syphilis into the region and the part of the prostitute in the chain of infection, both significant features of the present pattern, are considered below.

Imported Infection

In 1956, 42 cases of acquired syphilis with infections of less than one year's duration, were reported by the 22 V.D. Clinics of the Manchester Regional Hospital Board Area. The clinics reporting these cases and the places of infection are shown in Table I (opposite).

Nine (31 per cent.) of the 29 male cases (Table II) had been infected abroad, and a further five males (17 per cent.) were infected in the U.K. but outside the Regional Area; thus 48 per cent. of infections were imported. These may be considered to be minimal figures as five men in Preston and the five men in Burnley and Blackburn were infected in local epidemics arising from one infectious female in Preston and another in Burnley. The second female,

although infected in the Regional Area, probably represents an imported infection as her contact was a holiday-maker at Blackpool. The two Salford cases, infected in 1955, can be linked with a small epidemic which arose there in that year from one female, herself infected by contact with seafarers visiting the docks. It can therefore be estimated conservatively that during 1956 syphilis was an imported infection in more than half the male cases.

TABLE II
PLACE OF INFECTION OF MALE CASES SHOWN IN
TABLE I

Within Regional Area		Rest of U.K.		Abroad		Un- known
Place	No. of Cases	Place	No. of Cases	Place	No. of Cases	
Salford ..	1*	Liver- pool London South- ampton	1 3 1	Brazil ..	1	2
Salford ..	1*			Dakar ..	1	
Ashton- under- Lyne ..	1*			Java ..	1	
Blackburn	1			Panama	1	
Burnley ..	4			Scandi- navia	1	
Preston ..	5	West Indies	4			
Total Cases	13		5		9	2

* Infected in 1955

Role of the Prostitute

In 1955, sixteen men were seen at St. Luke's Clinic, Manchester, suffering from primary or secondary stage syphilis (Laird, 1957, Table III). Seven of these sixteen had been infected in Manchester, six by prostitutes (37 per cent.).

In 1956, of 29 male cases five are known to have been infected by prostitutes: one civilian in London and four seamen in the West Indies (Table I). Infection by a prostitute is almost certain in a

* Received for publication October 7, 1957.

TABLE I

PLACE OF INFECTION OF CASES OF ACQUIRED SYPHILIS WITH INFECTIONS OF LESS THAN ONE YEAR DIAGNOSED DURING 1956 IN THE CLINICS OF THE MANCHESTER REGION

Clinic	Patient's Number	Sex	Stage of Syphilis	Probable Place of Infection	Remarks
Seamen's Dispensary, Salford ..		M M	Primary Primary	Dakar Panama	Seaman Seaman
St. Luke's Clinic, Manchester ..	61789 61781 60032 60056 5160 5225 6359	M M M M F F F	Secondary Early latent Early latent Early latent Secondary Secondary Secondary	Brazil Unknown Salford Salford Birmingham Salford Salford	Seaman Passive homosexual Infected in 1955 Infected in 1955 Infected by husband (60032) Infected by husband in 1955
Royal Infirmary, Manchester ..	56/684 56/1321	M F	Early latent Secondary	London Manchester	Cup Final visit Infected by husband (56/684)
Ashton-under-Lyne	56/616	M	Secondary	Ashton	Infected in 1955
Bolton		M	Primary	Liverpool	
Oldham	56/145	M	Early latent	Java	
Stockport	10187 10186	M F	Early latent Secondary	Scandinavia Stockport	Seaman Infected by husband (10187)
Blackburn	A B C	M M F	Primary Primary Primary	Blackburn Burnley Blackburn	Infected by Burnley (J) Infected by Blackburn (B)
Burnley	D E F G H J	M M M M F F	Secondary Primary Primary Primary Secondary Secondary	London Burnley Burnley Burnley Unknown Blackpool	Infected by Burnley (H) Infected by Burnley (J) Infected by Burnley (J) Husband not infected Infected by visitor to Blackpool
Preston	9315 9309 9407 9409 9435 1524 1526 1630 1774 1792 1816 1836 1844 1888 2020 2042 2074	F F F F F M M M M M M M M M M M M	Secondary Early latent Primary Late Secondary Primary Primary Primary Early latent Primary Primary Primary Primary Primary Primary Primary Primary Secondary Early latent	Chorley Chorley Preston Preston Preston West Indies West Indies West Indies Preston Southampton Preston London Preston Preston Preston West Indies Preston Uncertain	Infected in 1955 Infected 1955 by Dutch seaman Infected by Preston (1774) Infected by Preston (2042) Seaman infected by prostitute Seaman infected by prostitute Seaman infected by prostitute Infected by Preston (9409) Civilian; consort not a prostitute Probably infected by Preston (9409) Infected by prostitute Infected by Preston (9409) Infected by Preston (9409) Seaman infected by prostitute Infected by Preston (9409)

further five seamen infected abroad and another civilian infected in London. A prostitute has thus been an essential link in the chain of infection in eleven (38 per cent.) of these 29 male cases.

Summary

A study of acquired syphilis of less than one year's duration in the area of the Manchester Regional

Hospital Board has shown that, during 1956, syphilis was imported from outside the Area in more than half the male patients and that prostitutes were responsible in about one-third of these cases.

REFERENCE

Laird, S. M. (1957). *British Journal of Venereal Diseases*, 33, 172.