SOCIAL STATUS AND SEX HABITS OF IMMIGRANTS ATTENDING A V.D. CLINIC IN LONDON*†

BY

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In recent years the immigration of Negroes from the Caribbean area has increased. Hall (1957) stated that there were at that time 75,000 West Indians in Great Britain, and that of these 30,000 were in London.

The attendance of Negroes at the V.D. Out-Patient Department of St. Thomas's Hospital has increased from 92 new Negro patients (2·5 per cent. of total new patients) in 1953 to 794 (18·4 per cent. of the total new patients) in 1957. The great majority came from the Caribbean area.

For these reasons it was considered important to learn more about the social habits and disease distribution of this racial group. A pilot study gave useful information for the main study, which was started in July, 1958. A form evolved by one of

us (M.S.R.) was suitable for translation on a Hollerith punch card for every new male or female West Indian patient. The Tables derived from these cards gave important information.

Results of Social Study

Forms were completed for 429 patients (297 males and 132 females); 351 attended for the first time in

TABLE I
TOTAL PATIENTS IN STUDY, BY SEX

Sex	Male	Female	Total
Number of Patients	297	132	429
Number who had attended in Previous Years	71	7	78

1958, and 78 who had attended in a previous year re-attended with a new complaint (Table I).

Age.—404 patients (78 per cent.) were in the age group 21–35 years, 47 (9 per cent.) being younger and 72 (13 per cent.) older (Table II).

TABLE II
DIAGNOSIS BY AGE OF PATIENT

Diagnosis		Age Group (yrs)				All Ages	
		0–20	21–35	36–50	Over 50	No.	Per cent.
Syphilis	Early	3	9	1	—	13	2
	Late	2	38	18	2	60	11
	Congenital	—	1	—	—	1	—
Yaws		6	31	5	2	44	8
Gonorrhoea		20	123	17	1	161	32
Non-gonococcal Infection		9	115	15	1	140	27
Chancroid, Lymphogranuloma Venereum, and Granuloma Inguinale		—	4	—	—	4	1
Other Conditions requiring Treatment		3	51	5	1	60	11
Other Conditions not requiring Treatment		4	32	3	1	40	8
Total	Number	47	404	64	8	523*	
	Percentage	9	78	12	1		100

* 94 (22 per cent.) of 429 patients had double diagnosis.

Diagnosis.—There were 523 diagnoses in the 429 patients including two diagnoses in 94 patients (22 per cent.). There were thirteen diagnoses (2 per cent.) of early syphilis, sixty (11 per cent.) of late syphilis, and one (0 per cent.) of congenital syphilis. There were 44 diagnoses (8 per cent.) of yaws, 161 (32 per cent.) of gonorrhoea, and 140 (27 per cent.) of non-gonococcal urethritis. Four (1 per cent.) were diagnosed as chancroid, lymphogranuloma, or granuloma, and sixty (11 per cent.) had some other condition requiring treatment.

Only forty (8 per cent.) were found to have no abnormality and to require no treatment (Table II).

If these figures are compared with the diagnoses of all patients who attended during 1958, it is seen that gonorrhoea (32 per cent. as compared with 25 per cent. of all attendances) was commoner in the immigrant group; and that early syphilis occurred in 2 per cent. as compared with less than 1 per cent.; but that those with no abnormality were only 8 per cent. as compared with 25 per cent. in all attenders.

Place of Origin.—333 patients (79 per cent.) came from Jamaica, the rest being fairly evenly distributed between Trinidad, Barbados, St. Dominica, St. Lucia, and British Guiana (Table III).

TABLE III
PLACE OF ORIGIN

Locality	Total	
	No.	Per cent.
Jamaica	333	79
Trinidad	15	3
Barbados	21	5
St. Dominica	12	2
St. Lucia	14	3
British Guiana	27	6
Other	7	2
Total	429	100

Occupation before and after Immigration

(a) *Males.*—98 (33 per cent.) had a skilled job in the Caribbean, but only 66 (22 per cent.) were

similarly employed in Great Britain. 187 (64 per cent.), had an unskilled job, and 208 (71 per cent.) had an unskilled job in Great Britain. The unemployed rose from ten (3 per cent.) at home to 21 (7 per cent.) in Great Britain.

(b) *Females.*—58 (45 per cent.) had a skilled job in the Caribbean, and seventy (55 per cent.) were similarly employed in Great Britain. Sixteen (13 per cent.) had an unskilled job and 25 (20 per cent.) in Great Britain. The unemployed however fell from 52 (42 per cent.) at home to 31 (25 per cent.) in Great Britain.

The trends vary in the two sexes, but the overall figure shows a slight shift towards unskilled jobs, with no evidence of increase in unemployment (Table IV).

Marital Status.—The marital status in the West Indies and in Great Britain is compared, using the terms "unattached", "courting" (which is probably equivalent to living together), "married", "separated", and "widowed" (Table V, p. 46).

(a) *Males.*—In Great Britain more men were unattached, more were married, more were separated, and fewer were "courting" (living together).

(b) *Females.*—In Great Britain fewer women were unattached and fewer were "courting" (living together), but more were married and a few were separated.

The general trend thus appears to be towards conformity with social customs in Great Britain.

Children (Table VI, p. 46)

(a) *Males.*—255 men had no children in Great Britain, and 132 had no children anywhere. Of the remaining 162 men, who had 376 children (average 2.3), 39 had 59 children in Great Britain (average 1.5).

(b) *Females.*—111 women had no children in Great Britain, and 51 had no children anywhere. Of the remaining eighty women, who had 185 children

TABLE IV
OCCUPATION BEFORE AND AFTER IMMIGRATION

Sex	Place	Occupation ..	Male				Female				Total			
			Before		After		Before		After		Before		After	
			No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.
		Skilled ..	98	33	66	22	58	45	70	55	156	37	136	32
		Unskilled ..	187	64	208	71	16	13	25	20	203	48	233	56
		Unemployed ..	10	3	21	7	52	42	31	25	62	15	52	12
Total			295	100	295	100	126	100	126	100	421	100	421	100

TABLE V
MARITAL STATUS

Sex		Male				Female			
Place		West Indies		Great Britain		West Indies		Great Britain	
		No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.
Marital Status	Unattached	109	37	132	45	31	23	13	10
	Courting	133	45	67	23	67	52	58	44
	Married	47	17	84	29	32	24	55	42
	Separated	—	—	7	2	—	—	4	3
	Widowed	3	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
Total		292	100	292	100	132	100	132	100

TABLE VI
CHILDREN

Sex	Male				Female			
No. of Children Each	No. of Patients		Total Children		No. of Patients		Total Children	
	Great Britain	Both Countries	Great Britain	Both Countries	Great Britain	Both Countries	Great Britain	Both Countries
0	255	132	0	0	111	51	0	0
1	26	74	26	74	12	39	12	39
2	8	36	16	72	4	19	8	38
3	4	22	12	66	4	8	12	24
4	0	7	0	28	—	5	—	20
5	1	12	5	60	—	2	—	10
6	—	3	—	18	—	1	—	6
7	—	6	—	42	—	1	—	7
8	—	2	—	16	—	4	—	32
9	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	9
Totals	294	294	59	376	131	131	32	185
Average			0·2	1·3			0·2	1·4
Patients with Children	39	162	Average 1·5	Average 2·3	20	80	Average 1·6	Average 2·3

(average 2·3), twenty had 32 children in Great Britain (average 1·6).

This confirms the fact that families are usually left behind, but, considering the relatively recent arrival of many immigrants, new families are multiplying fast.

Marital Status of Children's Parents (Table VII)

(a) *Males*.—In the West Indies 26 of 109 unattached males had 52 children, 73 of 133 courting

males had 140 children, and 38 of 47 married males had 112 children. In each group the average for those who have children is fairly constant, but the ratio varies in each group.

In Great Britain only five of 132 unattached males have six children, eight of 67 courting males have nine children, but 22 of 84 married males have 36 children. The pattern is thus similar to that in the West Indies

(b) *Females*.—In the West Indies twelve of 31 unattached women had 21 children, 38 of 67 courting

TABLE VII
NUMBER OF CHILDREN, BY MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS

Sex of Parents ..		Male								Female							
Place		West Indies				Great Britain				West Indies				Great Britain			
		Total Males	No. with Children	Total Children	Mean per Father	Total Males	No. with Children	Total Children	Mean per Father	Total Females	No. with Children	Total Children	Mean per Mother	Total Females	No. with Children	Total Children	Mean per Mother
Marital Status	Unattached	109	26	52	2·0	132	5	5	1·2	31	12	21	1·7	13	0	0	—
	Courting	133	73	140	1·9	67	8	9	1·1	67	38	68	1·8	58	6	6	1·0
	Married	47	38	112	3·0	84	22	36	1·7	32	19	63	3·3	55	13	24	1·8

women had 68 children, and nineteen of 32 married women had 63 children.

In Great Britain none of the thirteen unattached women had children, only six of 58 courting women had six children, but thirteen of 55 married women had 24 children.

These figures suggest a higher standard of behaviour in women when residing in Great Britain.

Accommodation (Table VIII)

(a) *Males*.—248 men (84 per cent.) were living in a furnished room, sixteen had houses, and fourteen had flats; only seventeen had unfurnished accommodation.

(b) *Females*.—102 women (78 per cent.) were living in a furnished room, ten had houses, and nineteen had flats; only thirteen were in unfurnished accommodation. Of the twenty with children a smaller proportion lived in a furnished room (but this is a small group).

Sex Contacts.—The questionnaire required certain details of all sex contacts within a period of 3 months.

(a) *Males*.—The 296 coloured men had 380 different contacts; 214 (56 per cent.) of these were

coloured women, and 166 (44 per cent.) were white. Of the 380 contacts, 66 were wives (six white), 49 were friends (seven white), 198 were casual acquaintances who were not paid (102 white), and 67 were prostitutes (51 white). (Table IX).

By another method of analysis of the contacts of 296 males, it was found that 139 of them (47 per cent.) had associated with coloured women only, 95 (32 per cent.) with white women only, and 56 (19 per cent.) with both coloured and white women (Table X).

TABLE X
RACE OF CONTACTS OF MALE PATIENTS

Contacts	No.	Per cent.
Coloured women only	139	47
White women only	95	32
Both races	56	19
None admitted	6	2
Total	296	100

It is thus clear that there is considerable sex contact between coloured men and white women, and that this occurs mainly through casual meetings and is by no means confined to prostitutes. It is also clear that a proportion of coloured men regularly consort with white women.

TABLE VIII
ACCOMMODATION, BY MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Sex		Male		Female					
Type of Accommodation		All Patients		Without Children		With Children		Total	
		No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.
Furnished ..	House	15	5	2	1	1	5	3	2
	Flat	12	4	10	9	3	15	13	10
	Room	248	84	92	84	10	50	102	78
Unfurnished ..	House	1	0	4	3	3	15	7	5
	Flat	2	1	3	2	3	15	6	4
	Room	14	5	0	—	0	—	0	—
None		5	1	1	1	—	—	1	1
Total		297		112		20		132	

TABLE IX
CONTACTS BY RACE

Patients		Sex		Male 296				Female 131			
Race		Coloured		White		Total		Coloured		White	
						No.	Per cent.			No.	Per cent.
Contacts	Type ..	Marital ..	60	6	66	17	52	—	52	42	—
		Friend ..	42	7	49	13	64	—	64	52	—
		Casual Unpaid ..	96	102	198	53	7	—	7	6	—
		Casual Paid ..	16	51	67	17	—	—	—	—	—
Total		No.	214	166	380	—	123	—	123	—	—
		Per cent. ..	56	44	—	100	100	—	100	100	—

TABLE XI
CERTAIN DIAGNOSES, BY RACE AND CONTACTS

Sex of Patients			Male		Female	
Race of Contacts			Coloured	White	Coloured	White
Diagnosis	Gonorrhoea	No. of Patients . .	134		27	
		No. of Contacts . .	73	97	25	—
		No. of Occasions	114	180	25	—
	Condition not requiring Treatment	No. of Patients . .	33		7	
		No. of Contacts . .	24	10	7	—
		No. of Occasions	26	12	7	—

(b) *Females*.—The 131 coloured women had 123 different consorts all of whom were coloured; 52 (42 per cent.) were husbands, 64 (52 per cent.) were friends, and only seven (6 per cent.) were casual acquaintances.

Thus there is no evidence of coloured women associating with white men, and only a small proportion had relations with casual contacts.

All this seems to support the view of Hall (1957) that the disproportion between the numbers of men and women immigrants forces the male to seek further afield in his sexual adventures.

Relationship of Certain Diagnoses to the Race of the Contact (Table XI).

(a) *Gonorrhoea*.—134 males with gonorrhoea had sex contacts with 73 coloured women and with 97 white women. 25 coloured women with gonorrhoea had sex contacts with only coloured men.

This suggests that the large number of white contacts plays a considerable part in disseminating venereal disease, the coloured women attending the clinic being the innocent (infected) contacts.

(b) *Conditions not requiring Treatment*.—33 males with no evidence of disease had 24 coloured and ten white contacts; seven females with no disease had only coloured contacts.

Although this is a small group, it is probably reasonable to assume that the lower the ratio of white contacts, the less the likelihood that the coloured male will acquire disease. This would, of course, exclude the small group of mixed marriages.

Summary

Between 1953 and 1957 there was an increase in the numbers of Negro patients attending the V.D. department of St. Thomas's Hospital, which appeared to be associated with immigration from the Caribbean area. It was decided to try to learn more about the social habits and disease distribution of this racial group. 434 patients answered questions in relation to sex, age, island of origin, length of residence in Great Britain, occupation before and after immigration, marital status before and after immigration, size and location of family, and accommodation. The diagnosis and information regarding recent sex contacts were also recorded.

An analysis is presented of the data so obtained.

REFERENCE

Hall, J. St. E. (1957). *Brit. J. vener. Dis.*, 33, 158.

Rang social et habitudes sexuelles des immigrants fréquentant une clinique antivenérienne à Londres.

Résumé

Entre 1953 et 1957 il y eut une augmentation dans le nombre des malades de race noire fréquentant la clinique antivenérienne de l'hôpital St. Thomas à Londres. Cette augmentation semblait être associée à l'immigration de la région des Antilles. On décida de mieux se renseigner sur les habitudes sociales de ces immigrants et sur la distribution de la maladie entre eux. 434 patients répondirent aux questions concernant leur sexe, âge, île d'origine, durée de leur séjour en Grande Bretagne, occupation avant et après l'immigration, état civil avant et après l'immigration, grandeur et domicile de la famille, et logement. On enregistra aussi le diagnostic et des renseignements concernant les contacts sexuels récents.

On présente un dépouillement des données ainsi obtenues.