

Increase of early syphilis cases during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Czech Republic

The COVID-19 pandemic reached the Czech Republic in March 2020, leading to three national lockdowns over the following 12 months. We analysed monthly diagnoses of gonorrhoea and syphilis in a large tertiary care centre in Prague during March 2020–February 2021 relative to the monthly average of the previous 4 years (March 2016–February 2020) (figure 1). After an initial slight decrease, there was an increase in confirmed cases of early syphilis in the second half of 2020. These results differ from those described in some other European countries.¹ The increase in early syphilis cases may reflect non-compliance with social distancing restrictions, as suggested by the marked increase in COVID-19 cases reported in the Czech Republic in the same period.²

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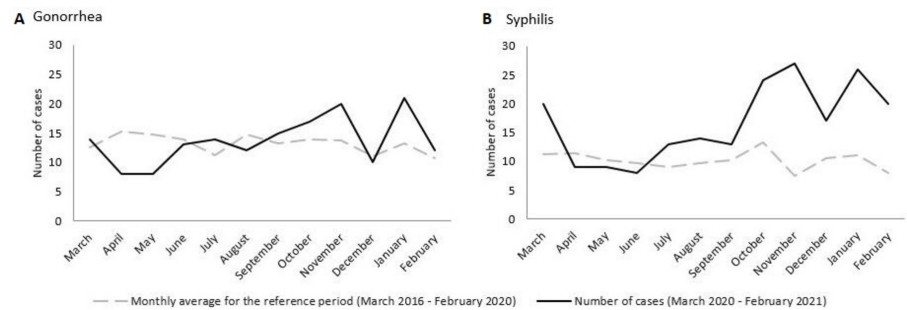


Figure 1 Number of cases of (A) gonorrhoea (by culture or nucleic acid testing) and (B) early syphilis (by serology or nucleic acid testing).

Handling editor Anna Maria Geretti

Contributors BB had the original idea, prepared the data and drafted the first version. FR prepared the data and participated in writing and revising the manuscript. JTH reviewed the manuscript drafts and provided feedback. BB and FR prepared the final manuscript. All authors had access to data. All authors have approved the final version.

Funding The authors have not declared a specific grant for this research from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing interests None declared.

Patient consent for publication Not required.

Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; externally peer reviewed.

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To cite Bížová B, Rob F, Třešňák Hercogová J. *Sex Transm Infect* 2022;**98**:231.

Received 8 April 2021

Revised 26 April 2021

Accepted 9 May 2021

Published Online First 26 May 2021

Sex Transm Infect 2022;**98**:231.

doi:10.1136/sextrans-2021-055098

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