

BACKGROUND

Gonorrhoea is a pressing public health concern in Europe, with Ireland experiencing a significant rise in cases.

In 2022, Ireland reported the highest incidence of gonorrhoea in Europe. The STI notification rate in 2023 increased by 30.7% compared to 2022 (from 346 to 452 per 100,000 population). Figure 1.

Gonorrhoea notification rates in females aged 15-24 years increased by 152%.

Gonorrhoea notification rates in males aged 15-24 years increased by 58%

This escalating trend underscores the urgent need for comprehensive understanding and effective management of the disease.

As such, this study aimed to provide valuable insights into the epidemiology, resistance patterns, and management strategies of gonorrhoea in the West of Ireland

OBJECTIVES

The study sought to comprehensively examine the epidemiology of gonorrhoea in the West of Ireland .

We aimed to identify prevalent resistance patterns, and assess the efficacy of current treatment protocols.

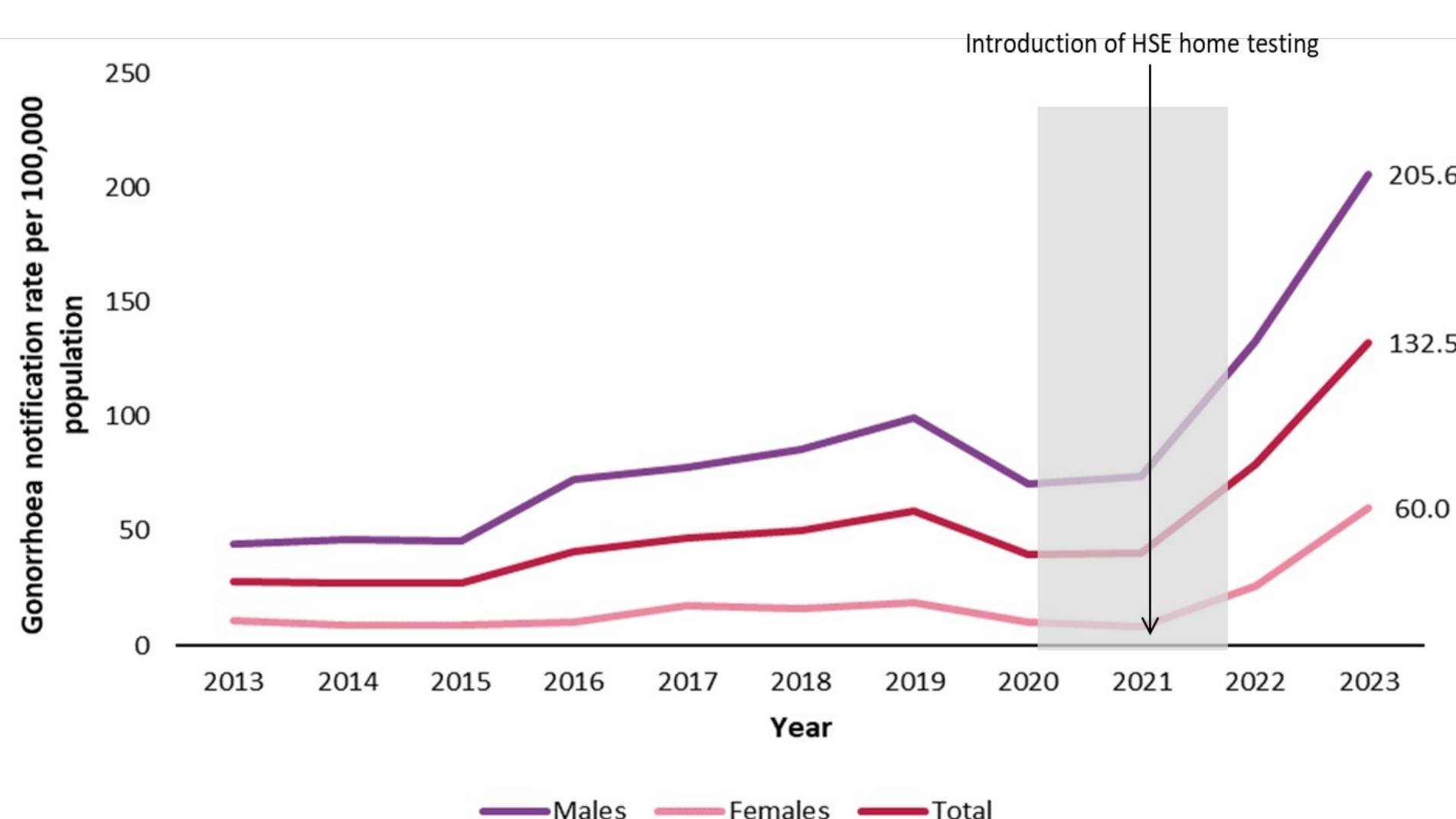


Figure 1

METHODS

Approval was granted by the Academic Office, Galway University Hospital.

A retrospective case series was conducted at Galway University Hospital over a 12-month period, encompassing all diagnosed cases of gonorrhoea.

Demographic data including gender, age, sexual orientation, and HIV status were collected, along with information on the site of infection, resistance profiles, and test of cure results.

RESULTS

Analysis of 142 patients was undertaken . There is a significant predominance of male cases, constituting 81.7% of the enrolled patients. The median age of the patients is 28 years. MSM comprised of 95% of male cases. This indicates a particular risk profile within this demographic.

Multi-site Infections: A considerable proportion of patients (42%) present with infections in more than one clinical site, suggesting the potential for widespread and simultaneous infection.

Antibiotic Resistance: Resistance to ciprofloxacin at 62%.

Treatment Protocol: Despite treatment, a significant number (10%) tested positive for gonorrhoea in the test of cure at three weeks.

Site-specific Infections: Positive test of cures were most commonly observed in pharyngeal infections (70%), highlighting the challenges in eradicating infections at certain anatomical sites and the need for tailored treatment approaches. Figure 2.

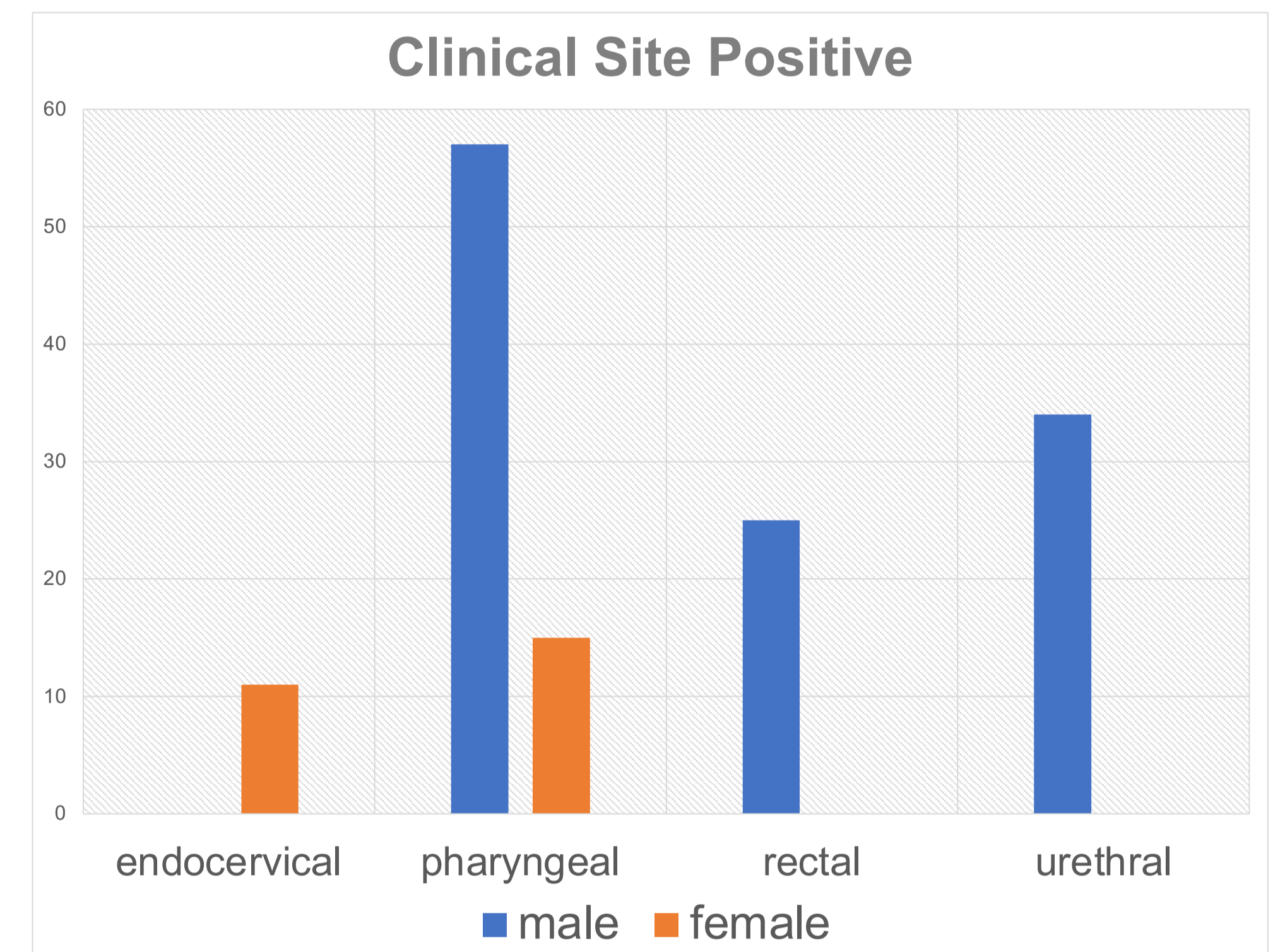


Figure 2

CONCLUSION

The study's findings shed light on key epidemiological trends and challenges in gonorrhoea management in the West of Ireland.

The disproportionately high burden of gonorrhoea among MSM underscores the importance of targeted prevention and intervention efforts within this demographic group.

Furthermore, the high prevalence of ciprofloxacin resistance highlights the urgency of surveillance and judicious antimicrobial use to combat the spread of resistant strains.

While the test of cure yielded promising outcomes, its routine implementation warrants further evaluation to assess its cost-effectiveness and necessity in clinical practice.

Overall, addressing the challenges posed by antimicrobial resistance and tailoring interventions to high-risk populations are crucial steps in mitigating the burden of gonorrhoea and safeguarding public health in the region.

REFERENCES

British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH). (2018). Gonorrhoea. Retrieved from https://www.bashh.org/resources/14/gonorrhoea_2018/