

Human immunodeficiency virus from genital ulcers in Nairobi prostitutes.

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Abstract:

Recent epidemiologic studies have implicated genital/anorectal ulcer disease as an important cofactor for acquisition and transmission of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) during sexual intercourse. To better understand the mechanism for the association between genital ulcers and HIV, exudates from 62 genital ulcers of 56 HIV-seropositive prostitutes in Nairobi (Kenya) were cultured for HIV. Twenty-six ulcer cultures could not be evaluated for the presence of HIV because of bacterial or fungal contamination. HIV was isolated from 4 (11%) of the 36 remaining uncontaminated ulcer cultures (2 introital, 1 vaginal, and 1 cervical) from 4 separate women. HIV was isolated from the cervical os from only 2 of the 4 women. HIV p24 antigen was detected in exudate from 1 of the 4 culture-positive ulcers and 0 of 32 culture-negative ulcers. Genital ulcers in seropositive patients should be regarded as potential sources of HIV, which could be important in transmission of HIV during intercourse. Public health measures aimed at controlling sexually transmitted genital ulcer diseases should be an integral part of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) prevention programs