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Federal Security Agency  
U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
Washington

VD FACT SHEET

(To accurately present facts about VD - venereal disease - remember these definitions: PREVALENCE is how much syphilis and/or gonorrhea there is at a given time; INCIDENCE is the attack rate; the term "VD" means both syphilis and gonorrhea. Prevalence and incidence should not be translated into each other. Also, where the statistics below refer to only one of the two diseases, "VD," a term which includes both syphilis and gonorrhea, should not be substituted for the name of the disease.)

PREVALENCE:

In 1941, there were 3,200,000 persons estimated to have syphilis in the United States.

In fiscal 1943 there were 868,000 cases of syphilis and gonorrhea reported, compared to a combined total of 514,300 cases reported for diphtheria, malaria, meningitis, pneumonia, poliomyelitis, scarlet fever, smallpox, tuberculosis, typhoid and paratyphoid, and typhus.

In fiscal 1943, there were 868,000 cases of VD reported; 590,000 of these were syphilis, 278,000 of gonorrhea.

Evidence of syphilis was found in 710,000 men out of 14,000,000 examined by Selective Service to June 30, 1943.

INCIDENCE:

The annual attack rate of VD as reflected in the number of cases reported by State health departments in fiscal 1943 was 4.4 per 1,000 population for syphilis and 2.2 per 1,000 population for gonorrhea.

At the beginning of World War II, it was estimated that at rates and under prevention and control measures existing then, one person out of every 15 in the United States would acquire syphilis by the time he or she reached the age of 50.

An average of about 500,000 new cases of syphilis and 250,000 of gonorrhea are reported each year.

In our military forces it has been found that gonorrhea strikes from 2 to 5 times as often as syphilis.

COSTS: (Etc.)

Syphilis often leads to fatal heart attacks, arthritis, paralysis, meningitis, blindness, insanity.

Gonorrhea is a frequent cause of sterility and blindness and often inflicts grave, permanent injury to various organs of the body.

It is estimated that 40,000 persons die each year because of cardiovascular syphilis.

Paresis caused by syphilis costs an estimated loss of private income of \$113,000,000 each year -- 77,074 MAN-YEARS and 24,597 WOMAN-YEARS lost each year.

VD costs also in immeasurable losses from industrial accidents, in absenteeism, in wages, taxes, buying power.

1,000,000 years of life expectancy are lost by the American population each year because of syphilis.

Syphilis shortens life expectancy of those infected between the ages of 30-60 by 17-30 percent.

Syphilis was reported as the cause of 17,728 deaths in 1941.

Syphilis killed one out of every 80 people who died in 1941 in the United States.

Out of every 40 deaths in persons between the ages 40-59 in 1941, syphilis caused one death.

Syphilis killed 10,000 people between the ages 30-59 in 1941.

(The following facts concerning the Army and Navy are taken from the latest official annual reports of the War and Navy Departments.)

ARMY:

Gonorrhea was second and syphilis fifth among the principal causes of admission to the sick report occasioned by infectious and parasitic diseases in the entire Army in 1940. The rates were 30.6 per 1,000 strength for gonorrhea and 7.3 for syphilis.

The admission rate for all VD for the whole Army was 42.5 per 1,000 strength in 1940.

The average length of treatment in hospitals or quarters for all VD was 32 days for the whole Army in 1940.

The average number of days lost from duty was 28 per case for syphilis, 35 days for gonorrhea, and 20 for other venereal diseases.

The number of days lost from duty because of VD was 456,148 in 1940.

NAVY:

VD occupied second place among all causes of morbidity and contributed the second largest number of sick days of any group of diseases in the entire Navy in 1940.

The VD admission rate for 1940 in the entire Navy, which had an average strength that year of 202,614 was 80.27 per 1,000 strength.

There were 229,366 sick days reported for VD in the Navy in 1940.

The daily average number of persons on the sick list because of VD was 3.10 per 1,000 strength in the Navy in 1940.

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