



PRESS STATEMENT

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SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS: PREGNANCY RISKS

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are common in high-risk groups in Papua New Guinea, but little is known about how common STIs are in pregnant women or about the incidence of STIs in Madang Province on PNG's North Coast.

Regina Wangnapi is working on a study of 400 pregnant women for IMR in Madang. Dr Wangnapi is also studying for a Masters of Medical Science at the University of PNG.

“Our study shows that sexually transmitted infections appear to be common in pregnant women in PNG. Preliminary data shows 15% of the women in our study carrying *Trichomonas vaginalis* and 10% carrying chlamydia,” Dr Wangnapi said.

“If we can identify the risk factors for infection and detect the symptoms, we will be able to reduce the incidence of STIs in pregnant women in PNG,” she said.

“This will be an important cornerstone for improving the health of pregnant women and their babies in PNG.”

To conduct the study, 400 pregnant women in Madang Province making their first hospital visit were screened and consented to enrol in both the malaria prevention in pregnancy study (IPTp) and the carriage of STIs study.

“The women answered questions about their social, family and health background and the STI related symptoms. They also provided a vaginal swab and a urine specimen, which are analysed by quantitative polymerase chain reaction (DNA analysis) at IMR Goroka,” Dr Wangnapi said.

The STI laboratory team are also looking at the sensitivity of the two samples and results will be presented by Soso et al.

Symposium Paper: Carriage of sexually acquired infections in pregnant women in Madang Province, Papua New Guinea.

Contributors: Wangnapi RA^{1,2}, Sawera C¹, Soso S¹, Ome M^{1,2}, Hanieh S^{1,3}, Umbers AJ^{1,3}, Unger H^{1,3,5}, Ryan CE^{1,4}, Siba P^{1,2}, Mueller I⁵, Rogerson SJ³.

Institutions: ¹PNG Institute of Medical Research, ²University of PNG, Port Moresby, ³University of Melbourne, Australia, ⁴Burnet Institute, Melbourne, ⁵Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, Melbourne.

Media contacts: Geraldine Vilakiva – phone: (+675) 532 2800 or (+675) 7205 6686
Email: geraldine.vilakiva@pngimr.org.pg Or phone Wendy Levy - +675-7201 7264