Challenges and Persistent Questions in the Treatment of Trichomoniasis.

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Abstract

Trichomoniasis is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by infection with the protozoan parasite Trichomonas vaginalis. It is considered the most prevalent non-viral sexually transmitted disease worldwide. Recently, the infection has been associated with adverse outcomes of pregnancy and increased risks of HIV acquisition and transmission, as well as an association with cervical and prostate cancers. The consequences of trichomoniasis are likely much greater than previously recognized, both at the individual and the community level. Since many cases are asymptomatic, and the most common approach used for diagnosis (wet mount) is also one of the least sensitive, millions of T. vaginalis infections remain undiagnosed and therefore untreated. The purpose of this review is to address what is known about the treatment of T. vaginalis infections and what additional approaches could be pursued. The increasing recognition of the potential public health implications of trichomoniasis has resulted in greater attention to improving effectiveness of the interventions for affected individuals. Currently, treatment relies almost solely on one class of drugs, the 5-nitroimidazoles, which causes concern should widespread drug resistance arise. There are also concerns regarding which 5-nitroimidazole to use as not all of them are active against T. vaginalis. Finally, new therapeutic targets and active compounds with treatment potential are considered.

KEYWORDS: 5-nitroimidazoles; Children; Mechanism of action; Neonates; New alternatives; Pregnancy; Prevention; Resistance; Treatment; Trichomoniasis

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