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Increase in meningococcal disease among people with HIV in 2022— United States

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Background

Meningococcal disease is a sudden-onset, life-threatening illness. Vaccination with quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate (MenACWY) vaccines is routinely recommended for adolescents and persons at increased risk for meningococcal disease, including people with certain medical conditions or taking certain medications. In 2016, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended MenACWY vaccine for people with HIV (PWH), but coverage in this population remains low.

Aim/Methods

Meningococcal disease cases reported through the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) from 2017–2022 were included in the analysis. Additional epidemiologic information and isolates were obtained through Enhanced Meningococcal Disease Surveillance in all 50 states. Isolates were characterized using whole genome sequencing to obtain serogroup and strain information.

Results

During 2017–2021, 5–15 meningococcal disease cases were reported each year among PWH, representing 1.5%–4.3% of all meningococcal disease cases annually. Based on preliminary data from 2022, 29 cases were reported among PWH, accounting for 9.8% of all meningococcal disease cases. Fifteen of these 29 cases were associated with a large serogroup C outbreak primarily among men who have sex with men (MSM). Excluding cases associated with MSM outbreaks for all years, there was a substantial increase in meningococcal disease cases among PWH in 2022 (14 cases vs. 4–8 during 2017–2021). Of the 14 cases in 2022 not related to the outbreak primarily among MSM, nine (64%) were caused by a single serogroup Y

strain. Most of these cases (8/9, 89%) occurred in Black persons, and seven (78%) occurred among MSM. The nine cases were reported from three states with no identified epidemiologic connections. The remaining five cases were not clustered geographically.

Conclusions

A substantial increase in meningococcal disease cases among PWH was observed in the United States in 2022. Given this increase and the low MenACWY vaccine coverage in this population, it is important that healthcare providers ensure all PWH are up to date with MenACWY vaccination. Continued study is needed to better understand factors that may have led to this increase in meningococcal disease cases among PWH.