

GONORRHEA

CRUDE DATA	
Number of Cases	5,825
Annual Incidence ^a	
LA County	64.4
California	55.3
United States	122.5
Age at Onset	
Mean	27
Median	25
Range	0-90 yrs
Case Fatality	
LA County	0.0%
United States	N/A

^a Cases per 100,000 population.

ETIOLOGY

Neisseria gonorrhoeae, a sexually-transmitted gram-negative diplococcus.

DISEASE ABSTRACT

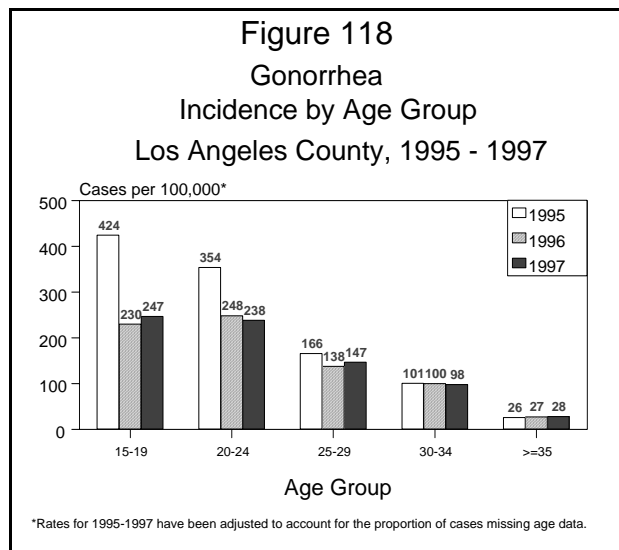
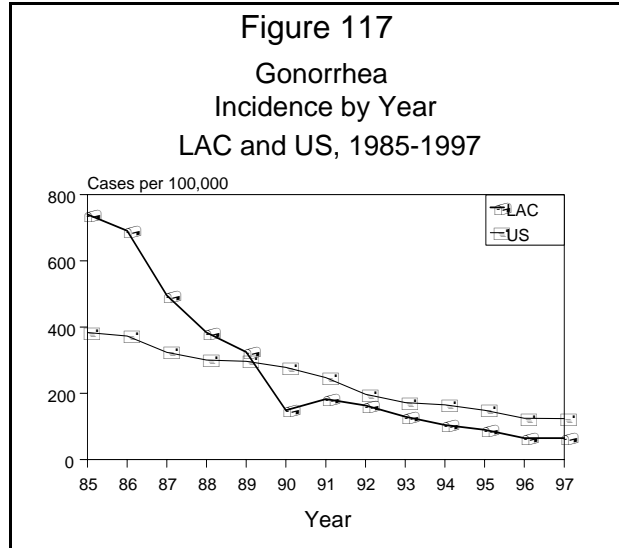
In 1997, gonorrhea rates leveled off after a steady five-year decline. Distribution of cases by age, race and gender in 1997 was similar to that of previous years.

STRATIFIED DATA

Trends: After an eleven-year decline, the rate of reported gonorrhea cases stabilized after 1996 (Figure 117). Due to population growth, case numbers rose slightly but the rate remained stable at 64.4 cases per 100,000 population.

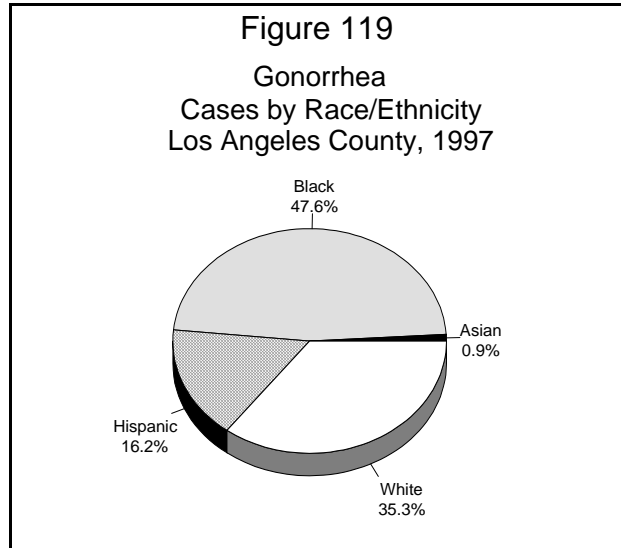
Seasonality: None.

Age: Adolescents and young adults 15 to 24 years old comprised over half of all reported cases. An increase in incidence from 1996 to 1997 among 15- to 19-year-olds (8%) is offset by a decrease in the 20- to 24-year-old group (-4%). Incidence in these two age groups (249 and 237 cases per 100,000 population, respectively) remains much higher than in other age groups (Figure 118).



Sex: The male-to-female rate ratio remained at 1.2:1 in 1997, with rates in both males and females remaining at 1996 levels. Although women are more likely to be screened routinely for gonorrhea, more intense symptoms in infected males result in males being more likely to be diagnosed.

Race/Ethnicity: Rates for Hispanics decreased in 1997 (-7%), but rates in all other racial/ethnic groups increased. Increases for Blacks (3%) and Whites (8%) were smaller than in Asians/Pacific Islanders (33%), but this represents an increase of only ten cases. A disproportionate burden of disease occurs in the Black population. The rate among Blacks is 18 times greater than for Whites and over 14 times greater than for Hispanics (Figure 119). These ratios are not affected by controlling for age.



Location: Six health districts (South, Southwest, Inglewood, Compton, Southeast, and Hollywood-Wilshire) accounted for 50% of the gonorrhea cases in 1997, reflecting ethnic/racial and socioeconomic status differences in gonorrhea incidence. While gonorrhea rates increased in 1997 in thirteen health districts, rates decreased in ten districts. The districts with largest increases were Southwest (26%), Northeast (24%), and Bellflower (22%), while the largest decreases were in Alhambra (-22%), Inglewood (-21%), Compton (-19%) and East Valley (-18%).

Comments: A recent advance in STD diagnostic technology now permits the use of urine specimens for the detection of gonorrhea. This highly sensitive assay, ligase chain reaction (LCR), eliminates the need for urethral swab collection in men, and can facilitate widespread screening in high-risk populations such as jail inmates. This should result in the detection of many more asymptomatic cases.

**Table 19. Gonorrhea Cases and Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Age
Los Angeles County, 1996-1997**

	Number of Cases		Rate ^a		Percent Change in Rate
	1997	1996	1997	1996	
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>					
Asian/Pacific Islander	48	38	6.1	4.6	33
Black	2,529	2,778	452.5	438.5	3
Hispanic	863	1,003	31.5	33.9	-7
White	509	536	25.1	23.2	8
Unknown	1,876	1,378	--	--	
<u>Gender</u>					
Male	3,173	3,111	70.4	70.4	0
Female	2,650	2,621	58.3	59.0	-1
Unknown	2	1	--	--	--
<u>Age Group</u>					
0-9	24	36	1.6	2.2	-27
10-14	81	97	11.9	15.5	-23
15-19	1,369	1,360	249.2	230.1	8
20-24	1,291	1,422	236.9	247.6	-4
25-29	1,011	919	146.3	138.0	6
30-34	771	745	98.1	100.0	-2
35+	1,147	1,048	28.2	27.1	4
Unknown	131	106	--	--	--
County Total	5,825	5,733	64.4	64.5	0

^aCases per 100,000 population. Estimates of race-, gender- and age-specific rates have been adjusted to account for the proportion of cases with missing data by assuming that each sub-category's proportions of the known and unknown cases are equivalent. A study conducted by the STD Program showed no significant difference in demographic characteristics between known and unknown chlamydia and gonorrhea cases.

**Table 20. Gonorrhea Cases and Rates by Health District
Los Angeles County, 1996-1997**

	Number of Cases		Rate ^a		Percent Change in Rate
	1997	1996	1997	1996	
Health District^b					
South ^c	446	452	316.8	309.6	2
Southwest ^c	770	654	252.6	200.7	26
Inglewood ^c	605	771	174.5	219.7	-21
Southeast ^c	192	184	153.5	133.4	15
Compton ^c	358	457	152.9	188.2	-19
Hollywood-Wilshire	537	498	129.6	114.4	13
Central ^c	297	303	118.0	105.6	12
Harbor	80	72	47.1	41.6	13
Bellflower	116	95	38.2	31.2	22
West	200	187	38.1	35.3	8
Northeast	108	96	37.6	30.4	24
Torrance	140	126	36.4	33.2	10
San Fernando ^d	204	177	36.0	32.1	12
East Valley	117	144	32.8	40.0	-18
West Valley	180	212	28.6	32.6	-12
East Los Angeles	51	43	27.2	21.4	27
San Antonio	94	110	26.3	29.1	-10
Pomona	118	134	25.4	28.8	-12
Foothill	66	72	24.8	27.4	-9
Whittier	62	76	22.6	27.3	-17
El Monte	79	78	19.7	18.9	4
Glendale	48	54	16.5	19.0	-13
Alhambra	32	41	9.7	12.5	-22
Unknown District	925	697	--	--	--
County Total	5,825	5,733	64.4	64.6	0

^a Cases per 100,000 population. Estimates of district-specific rates have been adjusted to account for the proportion with missing data by assuming that each district's proportions of the known and unknown cases are equivalent.

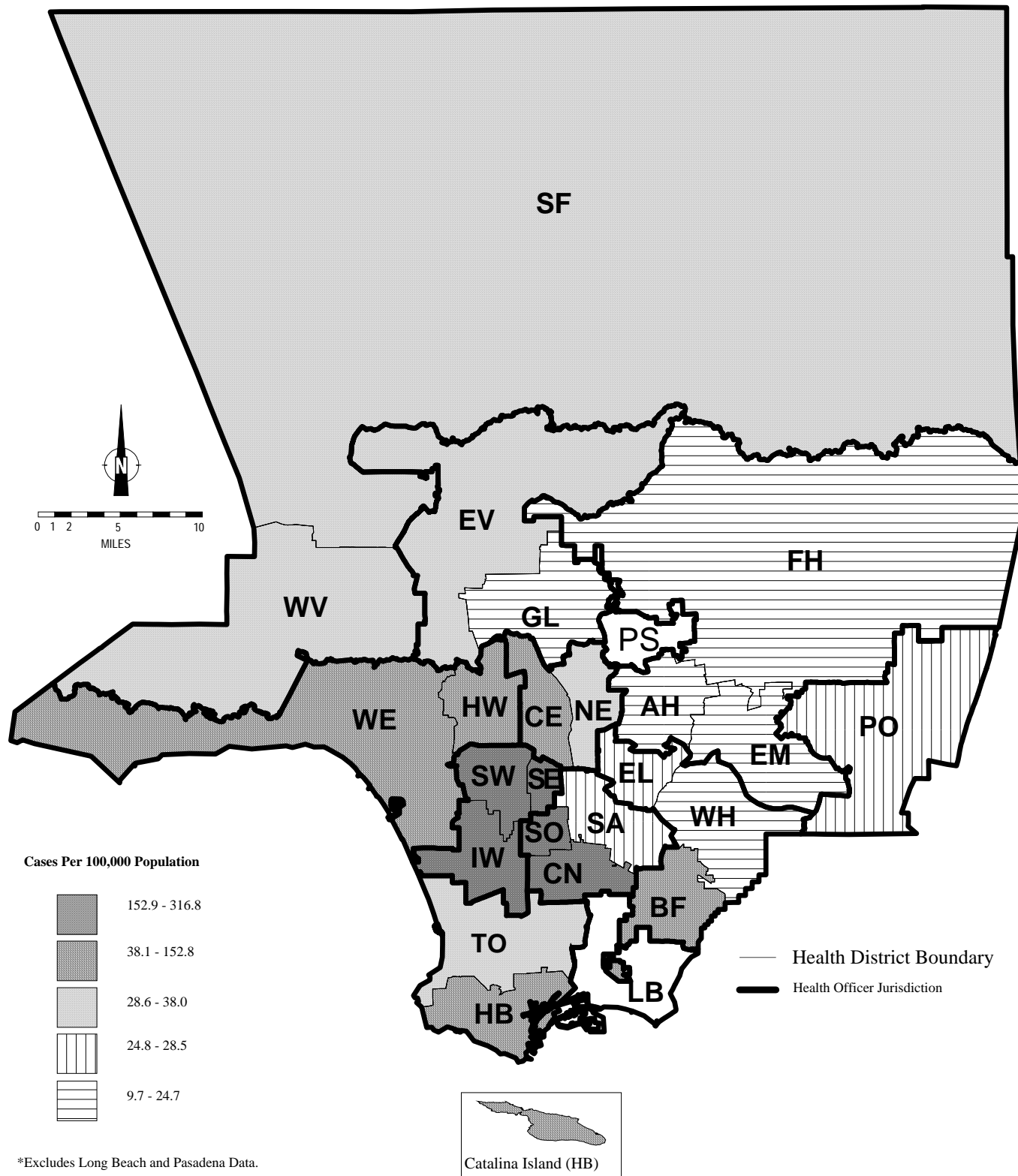
^b The health district case figures do not reflect the revised boundaries adopted in April 1994.

^c Core district.

^d Includes Antelope Valley

MAP 14. Gonorrhea

Rates by Health District, Los Angeles County, 1997*



*Excludes Long Beach and Pasadena Data.