

SYPHILIS, EARLY LATENT

CRUDE DATA	
Number of Cases	648
Annual Incidence ^a	
LA County	7.2
California	2.9
United States	6.3
Age at Onset	
Mean	33.7
Median	33
Range	13 - 79 yrs
Case Fatalities	
LA County	N/A
United States	N/A

^a Cases per 100,000 population. U.S. and California rates are provisional.

ETIOLOGY

Treponema pallidum, a spirochete bacterium.

DISEASE ABSTRACT

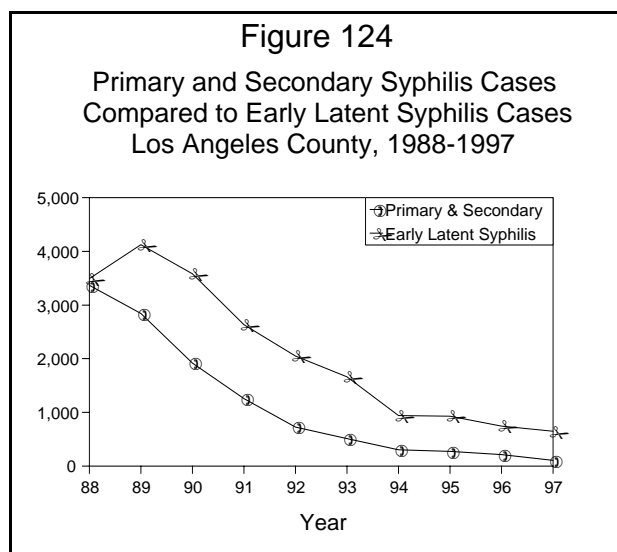
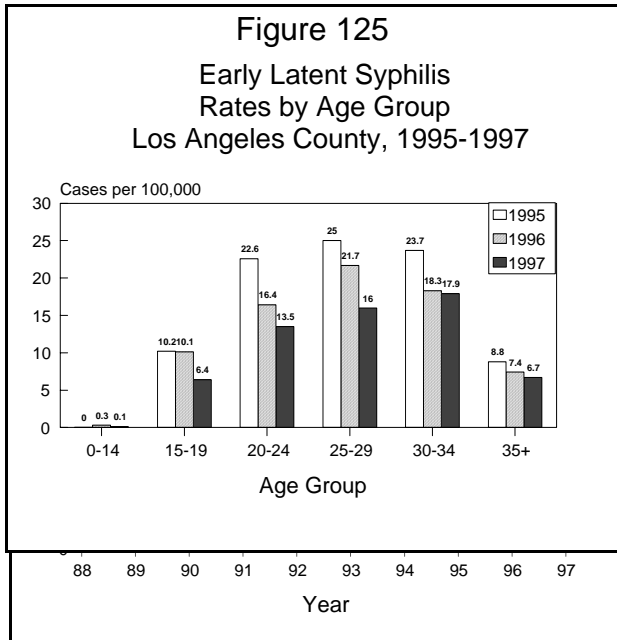
Reports of early latent syphilis, i.e., the asymptomatic stage occurring within a year after infection, have declined since 1989 (Figure 123).

STRATIFIED DATA

Trends: The decline in early latent syphilis cases parallels that of primary and secondary syphilis, but with a lag of one year due to increased time to detection (Figure 124). In 1989, early latent cases peaked at 4,126 (52.1 cases per 100,000 population); by 1997, the number had fallen to 648 (7.2). The decrease in incidence in LAC since 1989 has been greater than that of the US as a whole.

Seasonality: None.

Age: The age distribution of early latent cases is similar to that of primary and secondary stage infections (Table 23). In 1997, rates decreased in all age groups 15 to 19 and older,



except 30- to 34-year-olds. Overall, the highest incidence was in 20- to 34-year-olds, with 30- to 34-year-olds having the highest age-specific rate (18.7 cases per 100,000 population; Table 23 and Figure 125).

Sex: Cases among females are more likely to be detected in the early latent stage than during the primary and secondary stages. Symptoms may not be recognized, and health care may not be readily accessible. Frequently, infections are not diagnosed until screening during prenatal visits or at delivery.

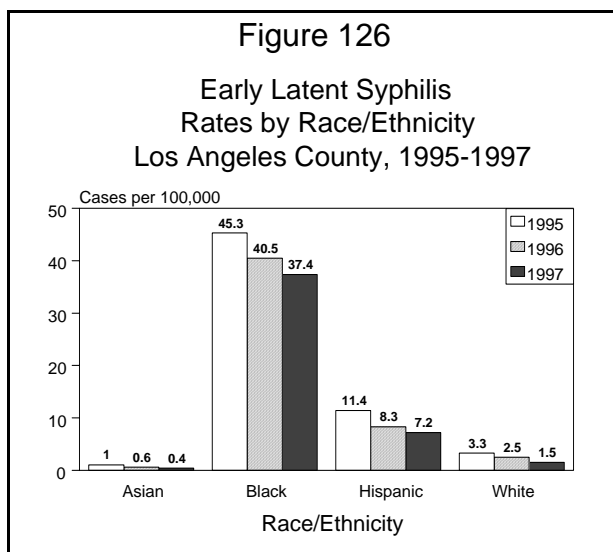
In contrast with primary and secondary cases, early latent rates between males and females show little difference.

Race/Ethnicity: Rates decreased among all race/ethnic groups in 1997. Rates among Blacks were over five times that of Hispanics and were 25 times that of Whites (Table 23 and Figure 126). The age-specific incidence among Blacks 35 years and older was 35 times that among Whites.

Location: Seventeen of twenty-three health districts had lower rates in 1997; however, rates increased in three “core” districts (Table 24). The seven health districts with the most cases reported 71% of the morbidity, up slightly from 1996 (68%; Map 16).

COMMENTS

The CDC defines an early syphilis case as one diagnosed within a year of infection. Given the difficulty of knowing the moment of exposure with an early latent stage infection, and the desire of health care workers to assure adequate treatment when in doubt, it is likely that some reported cases are not correctly classified by stage.



**Table 23. Early Latent Syphilis 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	4	6	0.4	0.6	-33
Black	258	303	37.4	40.5	-8
Hispanic	243	290	7.2	8.3	-13
White	38	68	1.5	2.5	-40
Unknown	105	77	--	--	--
<u>Gender</u>					
Male	328	375	7.3	8.5	-14
Female	317	366	7.0	8.3	-16
Unknown	3	3	--	--	--
<u>Age Group</u>					
0-14	2	8	0.1	0.3	-67
15-19	38	61	6.8	10.1	-33
20-24	76	96	13.7	16.4	-16
25-29	111	147	15.7	21.7	-28
30-34	150	139	18.7	18.3	2
35+	270	292	6.5	7.4	-12
Unknown	1	1	--	--	--
County Total	648	744	7.2	8.4	-14

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

**Table 24. Early Latent Syphilis Cases and Rates by Health District
Los Angeles County, 1996-1997**

Health District^b	Number of Cases		Rate^a		Percent Change in Rate
	1997	1996	1997	1996	
South ^c	84	72	48.8	44.1	11
Southeast ^c	40	37	27.1	24.0	13
Southwest ^c	87	80	24.2	21.9	11
Central ^c	68	106	22.9	33.0	-31
Inglewood ^c	81	81	20.1	20.6	-2
Compton ^c	49	53	18.4	19.5	-6
Hollywood-Wilshire	54	75	10.9	15.4	-29
San Antonio	27	33	6.6	7.8	-15
Foothill	15	10	4.8	3.4	41
East Los Angeles	8	15	3.6	6.7	-46
Northeast	12	22	3.5	6.2	-44
Whittier	10	13	3.4	4.2	-19
Glendale	11	7	3.2	2.2	45
East Valley	11	12	2.6	3.0	-13
San Fernando ^d	17	14	2.5	2.3	8
El Monte	11	14	2.3	3.0	-23
Bellflower	8	12	2.2	3.5	-37
Pomona	13	11	2.2	2.1	5
Harbor	4	9	2.0	4.7	-57
West Valley	13	25	1.7	3.4	-50
West	11	15	1.6	2.5	-36
Alhambra	6	8	1.5	2.2	-32
Torrance	3	7	0.7	1.6	-56
Unknown District	5	13	--	--	--
County Total	648	744	7.2	8.4	-14

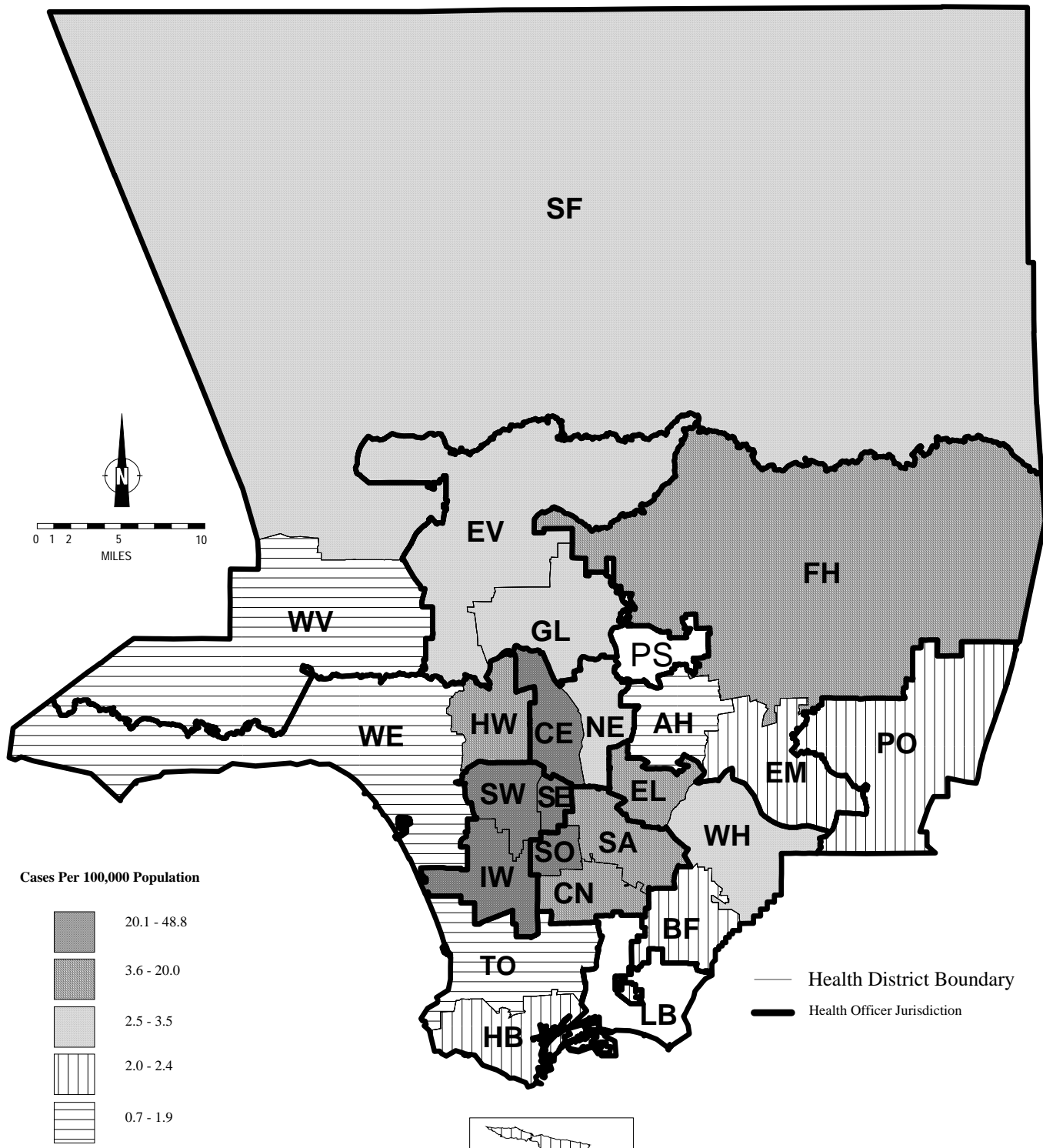
^a Cases per 100,000 population.

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

^c Core district.

^d Includes Antelope Valley.

MAP 16. Syphilis, Early Latent Rates by Health District, Los Angeles County, 1997*



*Excludes Long Beach and Pasadena Data.

