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| Title | Chlamydia Screening with Home Testing – An HTA |
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Aim

Chlamydia trachomatis constitutes a significant health problem. In Denmark, about 13 000 chlamydial infections are diagnosed annually. An estimated 24 000 infections among young women and men aged 16 to 25 years remain undetected. Untreated infections may result in complications such as infertility among women (risk 2.4%), ectopic pregnancy (risk 1.6%), and chronic abdominal pain (risk 3%).

Diagnostic methods are available that enable an individual to obtain a sample at home and mail it to the laboratory without consulting a medical doctor (home sampling). Only patients with a positive test result need to contact their doctor.

This report describes the consequences of continuing the present diagnostic strategy (general practitioners testing based on symptoms or clinical indication) versus a screening strategy involving the group aged 16 to 25 years and based on yearly home sampling with subsequent notification of the possible source of infection, the partner.

Conclusions and results

With the present diagnostic strategy, the frequency of chlamydial infections and the number of complications will remain unchanged. If, in addition, the home sampling screening strategy described above is offered, the prevalence of chlamydial infections would possibly decline to an insignificant level within 10 years.

The costs during this period will be 380 million Danish kroner (DDK), whereof first-year costs are 42.5 million DKK. Concurrently, it will be possible to save 238 million DKK as a consequence of 57 000 fewer complications. This corresponds to a net cost of 141 million DKK. If reduced loss of production is included, a further 376 million DKK will be saved after 10 years of screening. The strategy will be cost saving after the fourth year of screening.

Home sampling is generally well accepted by the target

group. However, due to stigmatization issues, the target group should have immediate access to information and advice. The screening strategy should be accompanied by general information concerning the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Special consideration should be given to ethnic minorities. A strategy of home sampling is relatively easy to introduce in the present organization of the Danish health services. Major barriers are not expected.

Methods

The HTA covers four basic elements, ie, technology, patient, organization, and economics. The HTA is based on literature reviews, internally designed and accomplished studies, and statements from recognized Danish experts.