

# Rise of antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea needs urgent action

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Gonorrhea is evolving into a scourge resistant to most antibiotics, and urgent action is needed to combat this public health threat, states an editorial in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

Gonorrhea, a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that causes [pelvic inflammatory disease](#) and urethritis, is evolving into multiresistant bacteria because most treatments are now ineffective. Japan reported the first example of multiresistant gonorrhea. *Neisseria gonorrhoea*, the organism responsible, can mutate rapidly and has a complex biology that has foiled attempts to develop a vaccine. It can also promote antibiotic resistance in other microbes through gene transfer.

Targeted approaches aimed at high-risk groups, such as sexually active young people, can help stop the spread of gonorrhea. Creative and humorous public education campaigns, such as Alberta's [www.plentyofsyph.com](http://www.plentyofsyph.com) campaign against STDs, which resulted in a 15% to 20% increase in testing in its first month, are a start. Access to testing and care must be made easier, and emphasis on safe sex and [condom use](#) is crucial.

"The spectre of widespread multiresistant gonorrhea demands an urgent public health, community and individual response," conclude the authors. "Without action, we are heading back to the pre-antibiotic era, with an escalation in the number of deaths from other multiresistant organisms as well as rampant gonococcal infections — with treatment options for urethritis limited to painkillers, baths and catheterization for

strictures."

Provided by Canadian Medical Association Journal

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