

ABSTRACT

The Prevalence of *Helicobacter pylori* in Barbados

Carmeta Patricia Douglin

Helicobacter pylori are common throughout the world. The prevalence of *H.pylori* infection in the Barbadian population was studied in 544 persons. 239 patients who underwent endoscopy were studied using culture, urease detection and serology and 305 asymptomatic subjects were studied using serology only. IgG antibodies were detected in 328 persons (60.3%; \pm 95% CI 56.1-64.5). Patients and controls had mean ages of 59 and 53 respectively. *H.pylori* was isolated from 45.8% (110/239) of the patients studied. 67% of the patients were seropositive compared to 55% of the subjects. The seroprevalence of *H.pylori* was highest in the parish of St. George. Risk for *H.pylori* infection in relation to diet, smoking and alcohol use have received much attention but no significant difference was found in prevalence ($p > 0.05$). However, having a pit toilet in childhood was a significant risk factor for *H.pylori* infection ($p < 0.05$).

Antimicrobial susceptibility tests were performed on 88 isolates, yielding the following sensitivities: amoxicillin (87.5%), clarithromycin (93%), metronidazole (54.5%) and tetracycline (94.3%). Metronidazole resistance was demonstrated in 45.5% of the isolates, in keeping with findings in other developing countries. As demonstrated in previous studies, ulcers and

gastroenteritis were among the most common diseases diagnosed in *H.pylori*-positive patients. Gastroenteritis and heart disease were similarly among the seven most common diseases diagnosed in both patients and controls.

Keywords: *H.pylori*; Barbados; Prevalence; Endoscopy; Serology