# New - injection free! - hope in treating drug-resistant gonorrhoea



Ramesh, a 46-year-old professional, found himself in a concerning situation during a work trip to New Delhi when he began experiencing discomfort characterised by a burning sensation while urinating, accompanied by a yellowish discharge. Promptly seeking medical advice, he consulted Dr I.S. Gilada, a consultant at Unison Medicare and Research Centre. Following a urine analysis—which required sending a sample back to Mumbai by flight—Ramesh was diagnosed with gonorrhoea, a prevalent sexually transmitted infection (STI). Dr Gilada prescribed an intramuscular injection of ceftriaxone, after which Ramesh reported significant relief by the following day.

A study published in The Lancet has made waves within the medical community, proposing that gepotidacin, an oral antibiotic typically prescribed for urinary tract infections, could offer a new and effective treatment for gonorrhoea. The potential of this oral alternative is particularly appealing for patients who may be apprehensive about injections, especially in light of the rising incidences of drug-resistant strains of the infection.

Dr Gilada, while not involved with the aforementioned study, noted an unsettling trend of increasing gonorrhoea cases in recent years, particularly among men who have sex with men and transgender individuals, stating, 'I see at least two cases per week.' This resurgence comes after a notable decline in gonorrhoea cases from 2000 to 2015, attributed to enhanced HIV awareness and the promotion of safe sex practices.

The clinical investigation in question, which commenced on October 21, 2019, and concluded on October 10, 2023, involved a cohort of 622 patients. The findings suggested that gepotidacin proved to be comparably effective as the current standard treatment regimen, which includes ceftriaxone and azithromycin. Jonathan D C Ross from the Department of Sexual Health and HIV at Birmingham University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust remarked on the findings, stating, 'The new pill was effective against strains of the gonorrhoea bacteria that are resistant to existing antibiotics. There were no treatment-related severe side effects for those treated with either medication.'

The necessity for developing new treatments for gonorrhoea is underscored by the alarming statistic noted in the Lancet study: no new antibiotics have been introduced since the 1990s. Gonorrhoea, left untreated, poses significant risks, particularly for women, as it can lead to severe complications such as ectopic pregnancies and infertility. The study also highlights an alarming increase in the prevalence of drug-resistant gonorrhoea, thus emphasising the urgent need for alternative treatment avenues.

Dr Abdul Ghafur, a senior consultant in infectious diseases at Apollo Hospital in Chennai, has echoed these concerns, highlighting the growing resistance of gonorrhoea to azithromycin and the emerging resistance to ceftriaxone. He has expressed optimism about another potential treatment, zoliflodacin, which has successfully completed Phase 3 trials and demonstrated efficacy against both azithromycin- and ceftriaxone-resistant strains. Dr Ghafur described gepotidacin and zoliflodacin as essential additions to the therapeutic arsenal in combating the rising challenge of drug-resistant gonorrhoea, marking a significant development in the fight against STIs.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.cdc.gov/sti-statistics/annual/summary.html> - This URL provides an overview of STI statistics, including the prevalence of gonorrhea, which supports the general discussion on the rising cases of STIs. The data highlights the number of gonorrhea cases and the decrease in reported cases between 2022 and 2023.
* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10010531/> - This URL discusses the prevalence of STIs, including gonorrhea, among key populations in India, which supports the increasing trend observed by Dr. Gilada. It highlights the higher burden of STIs among high-risk groups.
* <https://journals.lww.com/ijst/fulltext/2024/45020/resurgence_of_sexually_transmitted_infections_in.2.aspx> - This URL addresses the resurgence of STIs, including gonorrhea, in India, aligning with Dr. Gilada's observations of an increase in cases.
* <https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)01452-8/fulltext> - This URL could support discussions on new treatments like gepotidacin, though specific links may vary. The Lancet often publishes pivotal studies on emerging treatments for STIs.