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UREAPLASMA SPECIES AND ANTIMICROBIAL SUSCEPTIBILITY IN ASYMPTOMATIC WOMEN IN NORTHERN GREECE

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Objectives: This study was designed to determine the incidence and the antimicrobial susceptibility of *Ureaplasma* spp. in asymptomatic women in northern Greece, since there are not sufficient epidemiological data until now.

Methods: A total of 347 cervical smears were collected during the preventive screening program of Theageneio anticancer hospital of Thessaloniki. The samples were divided into 5 groups, according to age (20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61+ years old) and examined with conventional and molecular techniques. Isolation was performed by A7 agar and the gene of urease was detected by Real-time PCR in all the positive samples. Furthermore, antimicrobial sensitivities of the isolates were determined by the use of a standardized method to 9 antibiotics commercially available.

Results: Out of the 347 samples examined, 56 (16.13%) were found positive (>10^4 cfu/ml) by both means of culture and real-time PCR. Statistic analysis revealed no statistically significant difference among age groups, except for the group of 61+ in which positive samples are rare. Additionally, out of the 56 isolates, only 9 (16.07%) were fully susceptible to all antimicrobials tested, while the rest of them showed intermediate sensitivity or resistance. 13 isolates were resistant and 34 intermediate to ciprofloxacin, 2 strains were resistant and 29 intermediate to ofloxacin, 1 intermediate to azithromycin, 1 intermediate to clarithromycin and 1 to erythromycin. All isolates were susceptible to tetracyclines.

Conclusion: In northern Greece, 16.13% of asymptomatic women are carriers of *Ureaplasma* spp. in high concentration. It seems that reproductive ages are more often affected. Almost no resistance to macrolides and tetracyclines has been noticed, while more than 60% of the isolates present moderate sensitivity to quinolones.