

South Carolina's Melissa Nolan Completes Analysis of Child and Adolescent Trichomonas vaginalis Infection

[Melissa Nolan](#), assistant professor of [epidemiology](#) in the University of South Carolina's [Arnold School of Public Health](#), has collaborated with colleagues at the Baylor College of Medicine to complete a study in which they conducted a retrospective chart analysis of child and adolescent Trichomonas vaginalis infection. They published their findings in the [Journal of the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society](#).

Trichomonas vaginalis infection causes significant morbidity in the United States. Despite its high national disease burden, the epidemiologic characteristics of child and adolescent cases are not well understood. In this study, the researchers aimed to describe the socioeconomic, transmission risk factors, clinical manifestations, and geospatial variables associated with cases of T vaginalis infection in the Houston, Texas, metropolitan area.

Dr. Nolan and her team performed a retrospective chart abstraction of all T vaginalis cases at two large pediatric hospitals in Houston between 2008 and 2016. They identified 87 patients (mean age, 16 years; range, 4-18 years); 30% of them were asymptomatic, and 39% were coinfecting with another sexually transmitted infection(s).

Almost all T vaginalis infections in sexually assaulted patients were diagnosed incidentally and 40% of pregnant girls with trichomoniasis were asymptomatic. The scientists' geospatial analysis identified clustering of cases in areas of high poverty and in minority populations.

The authors' findings indicate that children and adolescents are at risk for T vaginalis infection; however, their risk factors might differ from those in adults. In addition, their geospatial analysis revealed the need for dedicated resources in neighborhoods associated with health disparities to prevent future incident cases.