

Rural Healthcare Quality Network

A Clinical Forum Newsletter



Medical Literature Review



RURAL HEALTHCARE QUALITY NETWORK

Quality Matters...

Infectious Disease

Question: Is there currently available a rapid, sensitive and specific test for identification of *C. difficile* in stool specimens?

Answer: Yes. A 45-minute molecular diagnostic test (Cepheid Corporation) is now available. Current rapid tests are insensitive (50 - 80%) and culture requires a 72-hour turnaround.

Source: FDA

Family Practice/Internal Medicine

Question: Does prolonged sitting with travel of all types increase the risk of VTE?

Answer: Yes. Air travel appears to have the highest risk, with increased journey time enhancing the likelihood of venous thrombosis. Such travelers are advised to ensure good hydration and leg mobility.

Source: *Annals of Internal Medicine*, July 6, 2009

Medication Management

Question: Do persons aged >60 need to be asked about their history of chicken pox (varicella) or have serologic testing to determine varicella immunity prior to vaccine administration?

Answer: No. This information is irrelevant to the decision to administer this vaccination (which appears to be underutilized, likely due in part to cost as the vaccine is not reimbursed by Medicare).

Source: CDC

Urgent/Emergent Care

Question: Does the administration of corticosteroids favorably improve the outcomes of adolescents and adults with bacterial meningitis in our country?

Answer: In this Mayo Clinic meta-analysis, morbidity and mortality were statistically improved in those patients residing in "high income countries" and those with a "low prevalence of HIV."

Source: *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*. 2009;84(5):403-409

Nursing Focused Care

Question: Is ibuprofen now available in an injectable form for the treatment of pain and fever?

Answer: Yes. Caldolor (Cumberland Pharmaceuticals) was approved by the FDA on June 11, 2009. The drug is given intravenously only, over 30 minutes. (What about rectal acetaminophen for fever?)

Source: FDA

Risk Management

Question: A patient with a serious neck injury demonstrates neurologic deficits but has a normal CT scan of the cervical spine. What diagnostic test is now imperative?

Answer: MRI of the cervical spine and spinal cord to evaluate for ligamentous injury and/or cord contusion.

Source: *Foresight: Risk Management for Emergency Physicians*. American College of Emergency Physicians, September 2000

Practice Pearl

Question: What is the current evidence regarding the role of corticosteroids in the treatment of severe sepsis and septic shock in adults?

Answer: The current article in JAMA suggests that corticosteroids overall reduce short-term mortality in these patients. However, there is insufficient evidence to state that corticosteroids should be used in all patients, no patients, or a specific subset of patients with sepsis. Thus, utilization of corticosteroids will continue to be at the discretion of providers.

Source: *JAMA*; 301:2362-2375