

Nexus



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with the Health Care Community

Hepatitis C: A Desk Top Reference (Part 2)

— Muriel Campbell, BScN, RN, Public Health Nurse

As of December 2004, approximately 110,000 persons in Ontario were known to be infected with Hepatitis C. These Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infections represent approximately 44% of the known infections in Canada, making Ontario the most affected province in Canada.¹

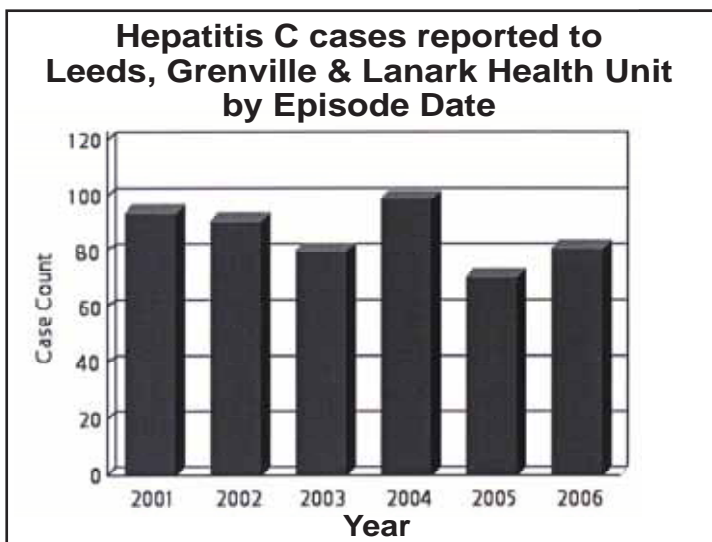
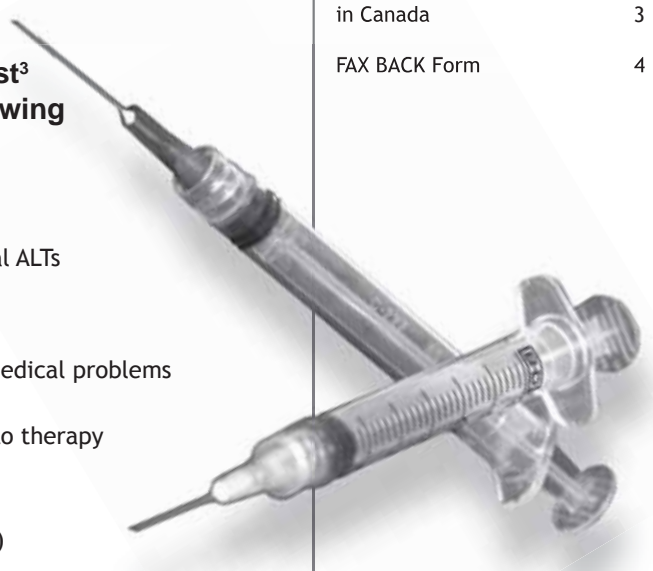
In Leeds Grenville and Lanark all diagnosed cases of Hepatitis C are reported to the health unit by the Provincial Public Health lab. From 2001-2006 the Health Unit received 516 reports of lab confirmed cases of Hepatitis C.

Follow-Up: For all People with Positive Anti-HCV Result²

- Do liver enzymes and LFTs
 - * Liver enzymes = AST, ALT
 - * LFTs = T-bili, INR, Albumin
 - * Check at least 3 times over next 6 months
- Do HCV-RNA (PCR)
- Offer HIV Antibody tests
- Offer HAV/HBV serology and vaccination if negative
- Rule out other causes of hepatic disease
- Physical Exam
- Patient Education/counseling

Refer to Specialist³ if any of the following apply:

- Cirrhosis
- Age <18 or > 60
- Persistent abnormal ALTs
- Suspect acute HCV
- HIV positive
- Other significant medical problems (e.g. Diabetes)
- Contraindications to therapy
- Pregnant woman
- Extra-hepatic HCV (e.g. lichen planus)



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nexus ('nek-sus) noun,
Latin: *bond, tie; from nectere - to bind*: a connection or link between things, persons, or events esp. that is or is part of a chain of causation
Source: Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Law, © 1996 Merriam-Webster, Inc.



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SYNOPSIS

Oral Health and Diabetes

— Dr. Robert Bowes, DDS, MPH,
Dental Consultant LGLDHU

Oral health is an integral part of overall health. This is particularly evident in the growing scientific literature that suggests a strong relationship between oral health and diabetes.

Recent studies have revealed that gum disease and diabetes can affect one another. Higher blood glucose levels reduce the body's ability to fight infection, making the person with diabetes more prone to bacterial, viral or fungal infections in the mouth. Thus, people with diabetes face a greater risk of developing oral infections and gum disease than those without diabetes.

It has also been found that gum disease can intensify the complications associated with diabetes by increasing blood sugar. Severe gum disease can increase both blood sugar levels and the length of time the blood sugar levels are elevated. This puts diabetics at increased risk for diabetic complications. One American study showed that people with diabetes required insulin less often after their periodontal (gum and bone) condition was treated and they had maintained good oral health.

Striving to achieve optimal health, including oral health, is important for people with diabetes.



Infrastructure for Colonoscopy Increased

— Bonnie Schnittker RN PHN

On May 4th the McGuinty Government announced an \$11 million investment to designate hospitals to increase the number of colonoscopies that can be completed in 2007/2008. Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital is to receive \$160,000 to increase the capacity to perform 500 additional colonoscopies. For the full details go to Ontario Government - Health - Media - May 4th:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/media/news_releases/archives/nr_07/may/nr_20070504_2.html

Hepatitis C: A Desk Top Reference *continued from page 1*

Counselling For the Hepatitis C Positive Person

Transmission Risk Reduction

- Do not share razors, toothbrushes, files, nail clippers, scissors
- Do not donate blood, blood products, organs, semen
- Clean up own blood spills, use bleach/water
- Inform Health Care Providers of infection
- Discuss HCV status with sexual partners
- In non-monogamous relationships, use condoms during sexual activity including anal sex and during menses
- HCV positive moms can breast feed unless nipples are cracked or bleeding

Disease Progression Reduction:

- Avoid alcohol intake
- Careful use of medications and alternative drugs. Some are potentially hepatotoxic (e.g. acetaminophen, Senna, Vit A)
- Eat a well balanced diet, get regular physical activity
- Vaccinate for Hep A and B if susceptible.
- Smoking cessation

Harm Reduction

- Abstain from injection drug use
- If appropriate, consider methadone treatment program
- Do not share drug preparation equipment
- Use Health Unit's Needle Exchange Program (NEP) "Clean Works"*
- Do not share snorting or smoking equipment

* For more information on Clean Works and NEP sites call: 1-800-660-5853

Role of Public Health

Reported cases of Hepatitis C are followed up by Public Health Nurses. A Public Health Nurse will contact the Health Care Provider who ordered the test to ensure the individual has been informed of his/her diagnosis. They will then speak with the client and provide counselling about behaviours that reduce the risk of transmission and provide information about lifestyle changes that can help slow the progression of the disease.

The Health Unit provides the Hepatitis A and B vaccines to those infected with Hepatitis C at no charge. These vaccines may be given by the Health Care Provider or individuals may be vaccinated at one of the Health Unit's immunization clinics by making an appointment. ❁

References

- ¹ Remis R. The Epidemiology of Hepatitis C Infection in Ontario, 2004. Final Report. Toronto: Hepatitis C Secretariat, Community Health Division, Ontario Ministry Of Health and Long Term Care; 2006
- ² The College of Family Physicians of Canada [homepage on the Internet]. C2004 [updated 2005 Jun 20; cited 2007 Jan 9]. Primary Care Management of Hepatitis C: Physician's Desk Reference. Available from: <http://www.cfpc.ca/English/cfpc/programs/patient%20care/Hepatitis%20c/default.asp?s=1>
- ³ The College of Family Physicians of Canada [homepage on the Internet]. C2004 [updated 2005 Jun 20; cited 2007 Jan 9]. Primary Care Management of Hepatitis C: Physician's Desk Reference. Available from: <http://www.cfpc.ca/English/cfpc/programs/patient%20care/Hepatitis%20c/default.asp?s=1>

For More Information

A Hepatitis C dinner workshop will take place Wednesday, September 26, 2007 at Code's Mill in Perth, Ontario. Dr. Thomas Shaw-Stiffel, MDCM, MMM, FRCP, FACP will present current information geared to Health Care Professionals. This event will be sponsored by Schering Plough Canada. ❁

Folic Acid recommendations for women of childbearing age

— Dianne Oickle, MSc, RD, Registered Dietitian/Public Health Nutritionist

Health Canada currently recommends that all women who could become pregnant take a multivitamin containing 0.4 mg of folic acid for three months prior to pregnancy and at least the first trimester of pregnancy to help prevent Neural Tube Defects (NTDs). Higher amounts of folic acid supplementation may be warranted for some women where there is a family history of birth defects.

Recently, the Motherrisk program at Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto has been recommending 5 mg of folic acid daily prior to and for the complete duration of pregnancy, regardless of family history of birth defects. Women in the tri-county area who have consulted with Motherrisk on a variety of issues, including folic acid supplementation, have been told by Motherrisk to increase their folic acid supplementation to the higher amount. A supplement of 5 mg of folic acid is available by prescription only, or a women

can consume five 1mg folic acid tablets per day. Motherrisk has not yet officially changed their recommendation, however, and the information on their website is still consistent with Health Canada recommendations.

The Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit is maintaining consistency with Health Canada recommendations and will continue to advise women to take a multivitamin with 0.4 mg folic acid for three months prior to pregnancy and during at least the first trimester of pregnancy to help prevent NTDs.

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (SOGC) is expected to release a position statement on folic acid supplementation in the fall of 2007. At that time, Motherrisk will be officially aligning with the position of SOGC. When the SOGC releases new folic acid recommendations, the Health Unit will then revisit the Health Canada guidelines. ❁

Ontario Youth and Harmful Artificial Tanning

— Bonnie Schnittker, RN, PHN

The Canadian Cancer Society released findings of a survey which found that 50,000 Ontario youth are exposing themselves to dangerous levels of Ultraviolet radiation (UVR).

Rowena Pinto, of the Canadian Cancer Society, says "That so many young people choose to expose themselves to dangerous levels of UVR is of great concern to us, and shows the urgency to regulate the tanning industry and ban artificial tanning for people under the age of 18. Scientific evidence shows that frequent ultraviolet radiation exposure and sunburns before age 18 increase the risk of developing malignant melanomas later in life. Melanoma is the second most common form of cancer in Ontarians aged 15 to 34 years."

The Canadian Cancer Society supports the World Health Organization recom-

mendation that people under the age of 18 be prevented from using a tanning bed due to associated health risks.

For the full story and survey results visit the Canadian Cancer Society's website at www.cancer.ca - Ontario - search media and see story on April 23. ❁

Link:

http://www.cancer.ca/ccs/internet/mediareleaselist/0,,3543_434465_1856550872_langId-en.html

References

- 1 Canadian Cancer Society [homepage on the Internet]. Toronto: The Canadian Cancer Society; c2007 [cited 2007 May 7]. Ontario youth exposing themselves to harmful artificial tanning – April 23-29 is Cancer Prevention Week; Available from: http://www.cancer.ca/ccs/internet/mediareleaselist/0,,3543_434465_1856550872_langId-en.html

SYNOPSIS

Champix - New cessation product approved for sale in Canada

— Yves Décoste, RN, BScN, PHN,
Tobacco Program Coordinator

In January 2007 Health Canada approved a new drug for use in helping patients quit smoking. Varenicline tartrate sold in Canada by Pfizer Pharmaceuticals as Champix or in the United States as Chantix has been approved for sale in Canada.

The medicinal ingredient in Champix, Varenicline tartrate, is classified as a smoking-cessation aid and is indicated for treatment in adults in conjunction with smoking-cessation counselling.

Varenicline binds to the brain receptors for nicotine and stimulates the receptors to release dopamine, which is thought to be part of the 'reward' that reinforces the addiction and causes cravings and withdrawal symptoms.

Adverse effects: Information from the clinical trials reveals there were complaints of nausea that subsided with continued use. There were also some complaints of abnormal dreams, constipation, vomiting, flatulence and xerostomia. Use of Varenicline may lead to physical dependence, according to the manufacturer but addiction and abuse were not reported during clinical trials.

Varenicline is one more tool that physicians now have to help patients with their addiction. ❁

- To view the Notice of Decision issued by Health Canada on April 2nd 2007 visit: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/prodpharma/sbd-smd/phase1-decision/drug-med/nd_ad_2007_champix_104007_e.htm
- To view the product monograph or patient information as issued on the Pfizer site, visit: <http://www.pfizer.ca/english/our%20products/prescription%20pharmaceuticals/default.asp?s=1>
- To view the press release issued by Pfizer on this new product being approved in Canada visit: <http://www.pfizer.ca/english/newsroom/press%20releases/default.asp?s=1&releaseID=220>

Reference

The Medical Letter 2006; 48: 66-68

Date: _____

From: _____

Fax to: (613) 345-2879

We value your opinion. Please feel free to send us your comments.

1. Comments/suggestions for the newsletter: _____

2. I would like to receive the newsletter:

By mail By e-mail: e-mail address: _____

3. Can we provide information on specific topics? Please check all that interest you.

Clinical Services

- Infection Control
- Communicable Disease
- Immunization/Vaccine Preventable Diseases
- Sexual Health
 - STI/AIDS

Health Protection

- Rabies
- Food Safety
- Safe Water
- West Nile Virus
- Emergency Response
- Health Hazard Investigation

Health Promotion

- Cancer Prevention (Breast, Cervical & Skin)
- Dental Health
- Injury Prevention
- Substance Abuse Prevention
- Chronic Disease Prevention
 - Healthy Eating
 - Healthy Weights
 - Physical Activity
 - Tobacco-Free Living

Family Health

- Child Health
 - Growth & Development
 - Parenting
 - Breastfeeding
 - Nutrition for Infants, Toddlers & Preschoolers
 - Healthy Babies/Healthy Children program
 - Family Abuse Prevention
- Reproductive Health
 - Preconception Health
 - Pregnancy

Disease Surveillance

- Information on the health status/health risks in our community
- Information from local, provincial & national health surveys

Other? _____

4. Is there any change to your contact information?

Name: _____

Address: _____

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