HYPONATREMIC ENSPHYLAPATHY

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1,3-β-D-Glucan in Patients Receiving Intravenous Amoxicillin–Clavulanic Acid

TO THE EDITOR: The fungal component 1,3-β-D-glucan is increasingly used to diagnose opportunistic invasive mycoses in immunocompromised patients. The 1,3-β-D-glucan assay (Fungitell, Associates of Cape Cod) was recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration. We found that the serum samples from two patients with hematologic conditions were positive for 1,3-β-D-glucan during treatment with intravenous amoxicillin–clavulanic acid. Serum samples were negative after treatment was discontinued. Neither patient had evidence of invasive fungal disease. Furthermore, 1,3-β-D-glucan was detected in the amoxicillin–clavulanic acid used to treat these patients.

We then tested 10 serum samples from six patients treated with intravenous amoxicillin–clavulanic acid. One of these patients had evidence of invasive fungal disease. The 1,3-β-D-glucan assay was positive for 1,3-β-D-glucan in the serum from this patient’s blood cultures. This result suggests that the assay may be useful in the diagnosis of invasive fungal disease.

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Imipenem in Patients with Immediate Hypersensitivity to Penicillins

TO THE EDITOR: It is considered potentially harmful to administer imipenem–cilastatin to patients with IgE-mediated hypersensitivity to penicillins because of a 47.4 percent rate of cross-reactivity (9 of 19 subjects) found in a single study on the basis of positive skin tests involving imipenem reagents.

Between 1997 and 2005, we studied 112 consecutive patients with such hypersensitivity, diagnosed as previously described, in order to assess the cross-reactivity with imipenem–cilastatin and to evaluate the allergic responses to imipenem–cilastatin in patients who had negative skin tests. Our patients had a total of 143 immediate reactions to penicillins. All patients had positive skin tests for at least one of the penicillin