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Paediatricians need to be aware which assays their local laboratories are using, and formulate their local testing policy accordingly.

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NICE guidance on urinary tract infection in children abandons routine antibiotic prophylaxis

We welcome the recommendation to discontinue routine antibiotic prophylaxis in paediatric urinary tract infection, as mentioned in a review of the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance on this subject.1 In one of our East London paediatric accident and emergency departments, the incidence of trimethoprim resistance in urinary infections increased from 30% in 1999/2000 to over 40% in 2006/7. This is in line with an increase from 24% in 1996 to 31.6% in 2000 from another London hospital.3 As for adults, it can be queried whether the incidence of trimethoprim resistance in hospital is an accurate reflection of community resistance.5 However, the Welsh Antimicrobial Resistance Programme recently reported an incidence of 26% and 27% for trimethoprim resistance in hospital and community specimens, respectively, in children under 6 years of age. High levels of trimethoprim resistance may relate, at least in part, to use of this agent for low dose prophylaxis.

In a study, we found that 19 (86%) of 22 patients with trimethoprim resistant infections were still symptomatic after 2 days of trimethoprim given as initial therapy while awaiting sensitivities. In a further study, 15 (28%) of 53 patients with trimethoprim resistant urinary infections had been given trimethoprim previously, usually for a trimethoprim sensitive urine infection. An increased risk of trimethoprim resistance has also been shown in adult urinary tract infections in the 3 months following trimethoprim treatment.6

When considering oral treatment for a paediatric urinary tract infection, it is therefore advisable to establish whether trimethoprim has been given recently and to acquire details of local antibiotic resistance patterns. The incidence of resistance to nitrofurantoin and cefalexin is 11.6% and 7.6%, respectively, in our hospital patients (similar to paediatric community rates from the Welsh Antimicrobial Resistance Programme). However, many children are unable to tolerate nitrofurantoin and it is ineffective against Proteus sp. Use of broad spectrum antibiotics such as cefalexin may promote antibiotic resistance and encourage growth of Candida spp as well as enterococci and Pseudomonas aeruginosa.

These problems emphasise the need to avoid unnecessary use of antibiotics and to ensure a correct diagnosis in the first instance by obtaining at least one properly collected clean catch urine sample before starting treatment. The figure of 109 organisms/ml quoted in the BMJ editorial accompanying the NICE guidance review as indicating urinary infection, can be too high especially for small male infants who may pass urine frequently. Also, lower numbers of organisms from specimens obtained by in-out urinary catheters or ultrasound guided supra-pubic aspirates, will still indicate infection.

After an infection, simple general measures to reduce the risk of recurrence (particularly for girls) include avoiding the use of bubble baths or washing hair in the bath.

Probable idiopathic intracranial hypertension in pre-pubertal children

Idiopathic intracranial hypertension (IIH) is characterised by disturbed cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) hydrodynamics of unknown aetiology.7 Diagnosis requires evidence of an elevated CSF pressure above 20–25 cm H2O during lumbar puncture (LP).1 However, no consensus exists concerning what constitutes the upper limit of normal CSF pressure for different age groups. Therefore, current criteria may inappropriately exclude some children from the diagnosis of IIH and delay the start of treatment.

We prospectively followed 25 children with suspected IIH who were referred to our hospital since 2004. LP with measurement of CSF opening pressure was performed with patients in the lateral decubitus position. In non-cooperative children, moderately deep propofol sedation was used. For a diagnosis of IIH, Friedman criteria had to be completely satisfied.1

In our cohort, three boys (aged 5 years and 4 months, 7 years and 1 month, and 10 years and 11 months) and two girls (aged 8 months, and 8 years and 7 months) had clinical manifestations consistent with IIH but a CSF opening pressure <20 cm H2O and therefore did not completely meet the inclusion criteria (table 1). Patient 1 presented with unilateral abducens nerve palsy, which resolved after LP (no pressure recorded). Two months later, the symptoms recurred and LP demonstrated a CSF pressure of 18 cm H2O. Again, symptoms
resolved after pressure release. A second relapse occurred after 10 weeks. This time, LP demonstrated an opening pressure of 27 cm H$_2$O. The child was put on acetazolamide and remained symptom-free.

Patient 2 presented with unilateral abducens nerve palsy, which resolved after pressure release. Four months later he experienced a relapse. Again, abducens nerve palsy responded well to pressure release and he remained symptom-free under therapy with acetazolamide. Patient 5 presented with chronic daily headache for 6 weeks and bilateral papilloedema. Symptoms resolved after LP and initiation of acetazolamide. Patient 4 was admitted with blurred vision and bilateral papilloedema. Symptoms resolved after pressure release and acetazolamide treatment (see box). Since the feared consequence of IIH is sight loss, we recommend a therapeutic trial with acetazolamide in all children with clinical presentations that are suggestive of probable IIH.

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