Dear Doctor

Re: Hepatitis B vaccination in pre dialysis patients

BACKGROUND

Hepatitis B vaccination is recommended for all susceptible patients. Patients with chronic renal failure are amongst the group at greatest risk of becoming infected with hepatitis B virus (HBV) due to their potential need for long term dialysis. According to best practice guidelines, HBV immunisation is therefore recommended for all patients who may require renal replacement therapy. Using conventional HBV vaccination doses, 45-66% of patients with renal failure develop an antibody response. However an increased response rate of 75-85% has been reported when 40 microgram doses of vaccine are used. Following discussions between the nephrology and microbiology departments, a protocol has been devised to achieve this target.

1. Patient seen in Nephrology clinic

When a new patient with chronic renal failure is seen in the nephrology clinic, his/her HBV status will be assessed by testing for hepatitis B antibody and hepatitis B surface antigen.

2. Immunity to Hepatitis B assessed

If immunity is not present (<10miu/ml) then immunisation will be recommended to the GP using the regime below.

| VACCINE: | HB = VAX 40 (Aventis Pasteur) |
| DOSE: | By intramuscular injection, 40 micrograms/ml, 1.0ml |
| SCHEDULE: | 0, 1 and 6 months. |

3. Following completion of HBV immunisation, the nephrology team will reassess the patient by performing a sero-conversion antibody test to HBV 1-4 months following vaccination. The GP will be advised accordingly regarding the need for follow up vaccine doses.

The Central Operations Liverpool have confirmed that HBV immunisation for these patients is supported by their protocols and claims for remuneration for the vaccine should be sought through them.

Yours sincerely

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