

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local Health Department STD Programs
Title X Family Planning Clinics
School Based Health Centers

FROM: Craig S. Conover, M.D., M.P.H.
Acting Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases

Charlie Rabins, MPH
Chief, STD Section

SUBJECT: IDPH-supplied Medications for Gonorrhea

DATE: January 9, 2004

Cefixime is a CDC-recommended therapy for treating uncomplicated gonorrhea, and has been supplied by the IDPH STD Section (ISS) to STD and family planning clinics, school based health centers, and other medical providers as the drug of choice for the oral treatment of gonorrhea. The supply of cefixime at the IDPH warehouse is now depleted, and currently there is no pharmaceutical company manufacturing or distributing cefixime tablets in the United States. Therefore, the ISS will provide alternative therapies for treating uncomplicated gonorrhea.

The following antibiotics with attendant guidelines for the treatment of gonorrhea are currently available:

- Ciprofloxacin 500 mg tablet - 100 tabs per bottle, or 10 unit doses per card for treating patients with uncomplicated gonorrhea who:
 - Ⓒ are **not** pregnant or nursing;
 - Ⓒ are **not** likely to have acquired the disease in Asia, the Pacific Islands, Hawaii, or California, or do not have sex partners with a history of sexual exposure in one of these locations; and
 - Ⓒ are **not** males who have had sex with another male in the past 90 days.
- Ceftriaxone 250 mg vial (injectable) for treating patients who:
 - Ⓒ are diagnosed with a complicated gonococcal infection, e.g., pelvic inflammatory disease or epididymitis; or
 - Ⓒ may have acquired gonorrhea in Asia, the Pacific Islands, Hawaii, or California or whose sex partner may have acquired gonorrhea in one of these locations; or
 - Ⓒ are males who have had sex with another male in the past 90 days; or

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- Ⓒ have been treated for gonorrhea with ciprofloxacin and continue to have signs and/or symptoms; or
 - Ⓒ are pregnant or nursing; or
 - Ⓒ are judged by the clinician to require intramuscular injection of antibiotic.
- Spectinomycin 2 gm vial (injectable) for treating patients who:
 - Ⓒ are pregnant or nursing and cannot be given a cephalosporin; or
 - Ⓒ have been treated for gonorrhea with ciprofloxacin and continue to have signs and/or symptoms; or
 - Ⓒ cannot tolerate cephalosporins and quinolones.

Note: Spectinomycin is contraindicated for patients with pharyngeal gonorrhea.

Since quinolone-resistant *N. gonorrhoeae* (QRNG) is becoming increasingly prevalent, clinicians should recognize the possibility of treatment failure when using quinolone antibiotics to treat gonorrhea. During January – October 2003, five cases of quinolone-resistant gonorrhea were reported in Illinois: all five cases were diagnosed in men who have sex with men; four of the five cases were identified in Chicago STD clinics. The *2002 CDC STD Treatment Guidelines (MMWR May 10, 2002/Vol.51/No. RR-6)* * recommend that infected clients should be questioned about recent travel to Hawaii, Asia, Pacific Islands, or California. Cases of quinolone-resistant *N. gonorrhoeae* have been reported from these areas as well as Michigan, Boston, New York City and Chicago. If clinicians suspect treatment failure, they should re-treat with ceftriaxone and contact the ISS to discuss submitting a specimen to an IDPH Laboratory for culture and antibiotic susceptibility testing.

During the first quarter of 2004, the ISS, Chicago Department of Public Health and the IDPH Division of Laboratories will collaborate in augmenting surveillance of QRNG and other strains of antibiotic-resistant *N. gonorrhoeae* by collecting cultures from males diagnosed with urethral gonorrhea at Chicago and sentinel downstate STD clinics. The IDPH Laboratory in Chicago will conduct antibiotic susceptibility testing of the isolates. The ISS will provide you with data generated from the QRNG surveillance program on a quarterly basis.

If you have questions regarding medications supplied by the ISS for the treatment of gonorrhea or want to report a suspected case of antibiotic resistant gonorrhea, please call the ISS at 217-782-2747.

cc: Bernard Johnson - IDPH
Vyki Jackson - DHS
Linda Wheal - DHS
Dr. Zajdowicz - CDPH
Dr. Wang - CDC

*The 2002 CDC STD Treatment Guidelines (MMWR May 10, 2002/Vol.51/No. RR-6) recommend eliciting a history from gonorrhea patients about their recent travel and that of their sex partners. The guidelines also include a recommendation that providers use cephalosporins, not fluoroquinolones, for gonorrhea infection in Hawaiian patients, their sex partners, or in patients who have recently traveled to Asia or the Pacific Islands. This recommendation has recently been extended to include a travel history to California (MMWR 2002;51:1041B4).