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Hepatitis A Vaccination in Adults

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Hepatitis A (HAV) Vaccination for Adults

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R4 2020 – Lewiston, ME

Preceptor: Kara Callahan, MD



Slide 2. Problem Identification

- Sharp increase in HAV in 2020 in Maine compared to previous years
 - 39 cases in first half of 2020 compared to 7-10 cases per year
 - 2019 also had a large increase in cases – 45 cases total
- At least 21 cases in 2020 had risk factors of injection drug use or housing insecurity
- During my time at Central Maine Medical Center Family Medicine Residency in Lewiston, ME, saw many patients with housing insecurity – and therefore could benefit from HAV prevention

Slide 3. Public Health Costs

- In 2018, 1/3 of those that contracted HAV in Maine were hospitalized
- Unable to find data on exact costs in Maine with regards to recent outbreak

Slide 4. Community perspective and support for project

- Kara Callahan, MD (preceptor) and several family medicine residents
- Residents said that they were unaware of the HAV outbreak in recent years
- Residents expressed that they were unsure of the indications for HAV vaccination
- One resident explained that it would be helpful to have a smart phrase for patient education
- Dr. Callahan provided information of clinic pharmacist, who did not respond to request for input

Slide 5. Intervention & Methodology

- Creation of printable, easy-to-read HAV information sheet for providers with list of groups in which the vaccine is recommended
- Creation of editable “dot phrase”/smart phrase for providers to edit and implement as they see fit
- Sent info sheet and dot phrase to preceptor to disburse to providers
- Plan to present these resources at resident didactics session

Slide 6. Results

- “Dot phrase” as below:
- .HAVedu:
- You have received _1 out of three of the vaccines to protect against Hepatitis A. You will return in _1 month for the next vaccine. Completing all three vaccines will protect you from Hepatitis A, a disease of the liver. You may have an increased chance of getting the disease or are more likely to have serious complications from it. The most common side effects from the vaccine are tiredness, headache, decreased appetite, and redness/swelling/pain around the injection site. Please ask your doctor any questions about the vaccine or about hepatitis.

HEPATITIS A (HAV) VACCINATION FOR ADULTS

COMPILED BY FRANCESCA GAROFALO, MS3 – UVM

ABOUT THE VIRUS

- Transmitted fecal-oral
- Usually symptomatic in adults: fever, nausea, anorexia, abdominal pain → dark urine, pale stools, + jaundice (>70%)
- Self-limited and mild but increases in severity and can be deadly in those with comorbidities/older adults

How is HAV prevented?

Handwashing, heating foods appropriately, avoiding tap water and raw foods in areas with poor sanitation, household disinfectants, and vaccination. The available vaccines are...

- Vaqta: two doses >6 months apart – adults ≥19 years old should receive 50 units per dose
- Havrix: (two doses >6 months apart – adults ≥19 years old should receive 1,440 ELISA units per dose
- Twinrix: contains HAV antigen and HBsAg; three doses on 0-, 1-, and 6-month schedule as used for single antigen HBV vaccine. Twinrix may be accelerated to three doses at 0, 7, and 21-30 days with a booster for long-term immunity at 12 months.

Which adults should receive the HAV vaccine?

The HAV vaccine was not recommended to children until the 2000s. Therefore, it is likely that very few adults have been immunized. The CDC recommends vaccination in the following adult subpopulations...

- ❖ International travelers to areas of high endemicity
- ❖ Men who have sex with men
- ❖ People who use injection or non-injection drugs
- ❖ People experiencing homelessness
- ❖ Immunocompromised persons (eg HIV-positive, chronic renal failure, on immunosuppressive drugs)
- ❖ People with chronic liver disease
- ❖ People who are or were recently incarcerated
- ❖ Any person wishing to obtain immunity
- ❖ Any person not previously immunized who has had direct contact with someone with HAV within two weeks of exposure

Is the vaccine safe? Effective?

All three vaccines are inactivated vaccines, so they do can't cause infection with HAV. The most common adverse effects from vaccination with Havrix, Vaqta, and Twinrix are injection site reactions and mild symptoms such as fever, loss of appetite, fatigue, or headache. VAERS, the reporting system for post-licensure safety and monitoring of vaccines, received about 25,000 reports involving HAV vaccines during 2006-2018. Most (~80%) were administered along with other vaccinations. 5.7% of reactions were serious – involving hospitalization, disability, life-threatening illness, or death. HAV vaccination during pregnancy appears to be safe as well.

After receiving all recommended doses, HAV vaccines are >90% effective at achieving immunogenicity in adults.

Slide 7. Evaluation of effectiveness and limitations

- Evaluation of effectiveness may be assessed by rates of provider prescription of HAV vaccination after presentation of information and printing of info sheet around the clinic
- Limitations include provider buy-in and implementation of routine HAV vaccination for adults

Slide 8. Recommendations for future interventions/projects

- Potential future interventions could include
 - Outreach to known housing-insecure patients to encourage immunizations
 - Include HAV vaccination when screening for other liver diseases such as Hepatitis C, autoimmune hepatitis, or evaluating for alcoholic liver disease
 - Ask parents of children receiving HAV vaccine at well child visit if they are also interested in receiving the vaccine

Slide 9. References

- Maine CDC. “Hepatitis A Increase in Maine.” June 19, 2020.
<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/health-advisory.shtml?id=2743380>
- Nelson NP, Weng MK, Hofmeister MG, et al. Prevention of Hepatitis A Virus Infection in the United States: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, 2020. MMWR Recomm Rep 2020;69(No. RR-5):1–38. DOI:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.rr6905a1>