

HepTalk Listserv Archive

April 2005

Announcements from HepTalk

Welcome to the April 2005 edition of the Listserv, a service for clinics participating in the HepTalk Project. Our focus this month is Hepatitis C. Please note that the articles and links below do not comprise recommendations from HepTalk, or from the CDC. They are mainly intended to stimulate discussion of issues you may find relevant to your client population.

The following links are included below:

1. Screening for Hepatitis C: A Common Sense Approach
2. Hepatitis C in New Mexico: A Public Health Approach to a "Silent" Epidemic
3. A Guide to Understanding Hepatitis C/Guía para Comprender la Hepatitis
4. Combatting HCV Fatigue
5. Cost Estimates for Hepatitis Tests

The **National Farmworker Health Conference** will be held from May 12-16, 2005 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. If anyone from your agency is attending, please send their names and e-mail addresses to Kath Anderson dempander@earthlink.net so that one of the HepTalk team members can touch base with them at the Conference.

An important announcement:

May is Hepatitis Awareness Month.

If you have plans for highlighting hepatitis issues at your clinic, please let us know. Or if we can help you recognize Hepatitis Awareness Month, send an e-mail to Kath Anderson at dempander@earthlink.net. We have limited supplies of CDC brochures on hand, and we'd be happy to send you a "starter" packet if you need one. Or, you can order directly from the CDC for English and Spanish patient education materials on hepatitis A, B and C prevention, free of charge at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/resource/materials.htm>.

Check the HepTalk webpage on the Migrant Clinicians Network website at <http://www.migrantclinician.org>. You can get to our page by clicking on "Clinical Excellence" on the Home page, and then clicking on "Hepatitis" on the menu at the left (<http://www.migrantclinician.org/excellence/hepatitis>).

If others at your clinic would like to be on the listserv, or if you have questions about the listserv or resources listed here, or if you would like to add something to the posts, please contact Kathryn Anderson, HepTalk listserv administrator, at dempander@earthlink.net. You can also contact the listserv administrator if you would like to unsubscribe from the list.

1. Screening for Hepatitis C: A Common Sense Approach

Hepatitis Foundation International
(<http://www.hepfi.org/living/screening.html>)

Excerpt:

The majority of Americans who are HCV infected are unaware of their infection. are at increased risk of accelerating damage to their liver by consuming alcohol, may spread infection to others, and may fail to take appropriate steps to reduce the risk of superimposed hepatitis virus infections. Waiting for the development of symptoms before testing for HCV infection is likely to result in more advanced liver disease and a lower likelihood of successful therapy. As a result HFI believes it is vitally important that anyone who has participated in high risk behavior, regardless of duration or how long in the past, be tested for HCV infection.

2. Hepatitis C in New Mexico: A Public Health Approach to a “Silent” Epidemic
by Dr. Gary Simpson.

This is a good quick powerpoint presentation that covers basic facts about Hepatitis C as well as this state’s strategies for prevention. It also includes basic treatment information and information about alternative treatments.

<http://www.healthlinknm.org/nmhepline/resources/slides.htm>

3. A Guide to Understanding Hepatitis C

Alan Franciscus and Liz Highleyman
Hepatitis C Support Project
PO Box 427037
San Francisco, CA 94142-703
<http://www.hcvadvocate.org>

This document is designed for patients, but is a good overview and includes transmission, prevention, disease progression, symptoms, diagnosing, treatment options, treatment considerations, management, a glossary, and resources. The information in this document is designed to help you understand and manage HCV infection and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HCV should consult a medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HCV. Permission to reprint this document is granted and encouraged with credit to the Hepatitis C

Support Project.

http://www.hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/hepC/hcvinformation_2003.html

The same document is also available in Spanish:

Guía para Comprender la Hepatitis C

http://www.hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/hepC/spanishinfo_2003.html

4. Combatting HCV Fatigue

Alan Franciscus, Editor-in-Chief and Fran Carey.

This article is also from HCV Advocate, as are the two previous links. The entire article is long, but includes some good options and strategies to help patients cope with fatigue. The beginning is excerpted here.

<http://www.hcvadvocate.org/news/newsLetter/2005/advocate0405.html#2>

One of the most vivid memories I have from running a support group is of a woman who came to one of our support group meetings complaining of fatigue and depression. When we started our check-in, she expressed her frustration with the increased bouts of fatigue and the effect they were having on her life. This person's story is not that much different from others who suffer from fatigue, but I think that she was able to verbalize what many of us go through when we are fatigued. She is a single parent of two children. In order to put food on the table for her family and a roof over their heads, she is required to work long days and devote all of her precious energy to work. In the evening when she came home from work she would basically collapse in front of the TV and would be unable to perform many of the functions needed to care for herself and her children. She became isolated and started to become depressed. In addition, she was unable to spend the necessary time to cook nutritious meals for herself and her children. The thought of exercise never occurred to her because she was so tired all of the time. For this person, life became a downward spiral and she saw no way out. Luckily, she came to a support group. Throughout the evening we were able to give her words of encouragement - she was not alone. We were also able to help her develop strategies to combat her fatigue. It was one of those incredible support group moments when you can start to see a ray of hope in someone's eye.

One of the most common symptoms that people with hepatitis C experience is fatigue. In fact, in one study 67% of people living with hepatitis C reported fatigue as a symptom. Fatigue can range from mild to severe and can affect every area of life. Fatigue is a difficult symptom to quantify since it affects everyone differently. Some people with hepatitis C have constant fatigue while others may have fatigue cycles - sometimes they feel energetic and at other times they may feel so tired that they might not be able to perform basic daily functions, such as going to work, cleaning the house or joining in on social event.

5. Cost Estimates for Hepatitis Tests

Here are some estimated hepatitis testing costs from a couple of different sources, via our CDC HepTalk Project Office. Interpret with caution and only use these as ballpark figures. Costs will vary between sites - even within the same state or city.

Hepatitis Testing Costs In US \$

*_Test_ _Medicare_
Large reference lab
_Hospital
_* As of 11/16/04
As of 2003
As of 2/1/05
anti-HAV IgM 15.73
16.08
41.00
Total anti-HAV
(IgM and IgG) 17.31
10.00
34.00
Anti-HBc 16.84
6.00
60.00
HBsAg 14.43
5.30
61.00
Anti-HBs 15.01
10.00
61.00
Anti-HBc 16.44
17.15
47.00

Anti-HCV (EIA) 19.94
12.00
46.00
Anti-HCV (RIBA) 21.64
108.48
202.00
HCV RNA
(Real Time
PCR – quant.) 59.85
110.00
202.00
HCV RNA
(PCR – qual.) 49.04
90.00
93.00
HCV RNA
(Real Time
PCR + genotype) 359.69
380.00
693.00

HepTalk is a project of the Migrant Clinicians Network and Community Health Education Concepts. HepTalk is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The goal of HepTalk is to help clinicians serving migrants and recent immigrants engage in productive discussions about hepatitis risks with their clients and help them make prevention plans. The HepTalk listserv is a support service for clinics participating in the project. This is a post-only listserv and postings will come from HepTalk staff about once a month. If others at your clinic would like to be on the listserv, or if you have questions about the listserv or resources listed here, or if you would like to add something to the posts, please contact Kathryn Anderson, HepTalk training and education coordinator and listserv administrator, at dempander@earthlink.net. You can also contact the listserv administrator if you would like to unsubscribe from the list. The content of the HepTalk listserv is compiled by HepTalk project staff.