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Vaccination status of patients with chronic liver disease referred to a transplantation centre

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Background: The vaccination status of liver transplant (LT) candidates is largely unknown. We have prospectively investigated the prevalence of immunizations among LT candidates at a large university transplant centre.

Material/methods: During one year (June 2015-June 2016), we prospectively asked LT candidates admitted for a pretransplant evaluation for their vaccination documents. The immunization rates for pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, seasonal influenza and pneumococcal were calculated. Serological analyses were performed to determine the immunization status to hepatitis A, hepatitis B, measles, and varicella. Immunizations were subsequently offered to all patients during their hospital stay.

Results: We evaluated 76 patients admitted for pretansplant evaluation (mean age $53 \pm 14,3$ years, female 35.5%, male 64.5%). Most of them were referred for cirrhosis (79%). We found that 11 (15%) of them had evaluable vaccination documents. Among all, 21% had received a diphtheria-tetanus-polio (dTP) vaccination in the past 10 years, 12% of the patients at least 1 pneumococcal vaccination and 27 % a seasonal influenza vaccine (the preceding season). Serological analyses were available for all patients. Insufficient immunization rates were recorded for: hepatitis B 51%, hepatitis A 64.5%, varicella 91%, and measles 96%. Only 2.6% (n=2) of LT candidates had received all vaccinations as recommended. All patients who needed to be protected against dTP, pneumococcal infections, influenza and/or hepatitis agreed to be immunized either during their hospital stay or after discharge.

Conclusions: Vaccination coverage of patients with chronic liver diseases needs to be improved before they are referred to a transplantation centre. During the hospital stay, a consultation with an infectious disease specialist greatly contributes to improve the vaccination coverage. Serological surveys will be conducted to assess vaccine-induced immune responses just before and after liver transplantation.