

CONTENTS

FEATURE: Immunisation Conference August 2004	1
Cold Chain Workshop	1
Nurse Education	1
Questions & Answers	2
Profile	2
Vaccine Distribution Alert	2

FEATURE

Immunisation at the Crossroads - challenges and strategies August 2004 Conference

The Public Health Association of Australia held its 9th National Immunisation / 1st Asia Pacific Vaccine Preventable Diseases Conference titled 'Immunisation at the Crossroads- challenges and strategies' in August 2004. South Australia was well represented with interested persons from the Divisions of General Practice, Community Health, State and Local Government and hospitals attending the conference.

SA participants presented various topics including; the anti immunisation debate, a consent resource for providers, the public provider issues, meningococcal 15-19 program, vaccine safety and a data linkage project, indigenous resources and pneumococcal vaccine in the elderly.

Topics also presented by SA participants included reactogenicity of a 2 dose hepatitis A/B in children, effective training for immunisation program managers, data logging of fridges, a pilot adolescent school influenza program, ultrasound assessment of extensive limb swelling reactions in children following DTPa vaccination, and improving documentation and communication about immunisation in a statewide service.

South Australia remains one of the leading States for innovation in the field of immunisation.

Some of the highlights of the conference included:

- Prof Terry Nolan; Developments in vaccines against Human Papilloma Virus: warts and all. HPV DNA is found in 99.7% of all cervical cancers. A vaccine may be available in Australia in the next couple of years.
- Dr Mary Ramsey: The impact of meningococcal serogroup C conjugate in Europe. 'Analysis suggests that protection does decline with time but remains high in all those vaccinated above the age of 5 months.'
- Dr Stewart Reid: Can vaccination control meningococcal disease in New Zealand? 'A vaccine has been developed specifically for the New Zealand strain of 'B' disease. Following licensure, a staged epidemic control campaign is planned'.

This newsletter is developed by the SA Immunisation Coordination Unit. We are always seeking contributions for the newsletter! What would you like to know? Do you have any issues of interest or concerns that you would like highlighted to other immunisation providers. If so we would like to hear about them: please email to susan.lewis@health.sa.gov.au Some items are referenced to page numbers in the 'handbook' which refers to the Australian Immunisation Handbook, 8th edition.

IMMUNISATION EDUCATION FOR PRACTICE NURSES

The development of an educational program for health professionals providing immunisation is still in progress.

The aim of the educational program will be to assist interested persons in developing or maintaining their skills in the provision of immunisation services. The modules will include basic information about legislation and consent, cold chain management, vaccine administration and immunisation programs.

The program will be presented in two different ways: firstly as a workshop (for those who can manage to join other providers to share ideas) and secondly in a workbook (for those who wish to study independently). Watch out for the next issue of 'Sharp and to the Point' as it will provide more information about these sessions.

COLD CHAIN WORKSHOP PRESENTED AT CONFERENCE

A cold chain workshop was held at the immunisation conference where many new recommendations were discussed by a range of health professionals. The 'Keep it Cool' booklet is being revamped. New recommendations are being proposed, by the working party, which will require endorsement from the National Immunisation Committee.

A major message was that in the future, only special vaccine refrigerators will be recommended to store vaccines. In the meantime the advice is to 'get to know your domestic fridge' very well as individual fridges are all different. Getting to know the cold spots, the warm spots and the air flows is important because your knowledge of your fridge may save vaccines and your time.

If you need further information or assistance with your fridge contact your Local Immunisation Coordinator in the Divisions of General Practice or SAICU on 8226-7177.



Q What does a parent need to be informed of when a script is written for a vaccine?

A A parent should be advised that the vaccine should be administered immediately after receiving it from the pharmacist. The vaccine should not be stored in a fridge at home as they are unmonitored and temperatures can fluctuate.

There have been several instances where parents have been advised to attend a public council clinic to have their purchased vaccine administered. In most cases the provider can not be sure that the cold chain has been maintained therefore can not administer the vaccine. Both the provider and the parents are placed in a very difficult situation. The parent/client should be advised to return to the provider that wrote the script for administration of the vaccine.

Q Does your client require dTpa or DTpa? There is a difference!

A With the introduction of dTpa (Boostrix) for the Year 9 students via the school program, SAICU has received reports of providers administering DTpa (Infanrix) instead of dTpa.

DTpa (Infanrix) is only licensed up to the 8th birthday as it has higher levels of diphtheria toxoid compared to dTpa (Boostrix). Dose reduction is necessary because of the reduced tolerance of older children and adults to diphtheria toxoid. (handbook p125)

If a student misses the dTpa at school, they can attend a council clinic to have the free vaccine. If they choose to visit their local GP, the vaccine will need to be purchased by script.

Q Should children be vaccinated while the child's mother is pregnant?

A There is no problem with giving routine vaccinations to a child whose mother is pregnant. MMR vaccine viruses are not transmissible, and transmission of varicella-zoster vaccine virus is very rare and causes a very mild infection. Furthermore, vaccinating the child of a pregnant mother will reduce the risk of her being infected by her offspring if she is not immune. Administration of varicella-zoster vaccine to household contacts of non-immune pregnant women is safe. (handbook p 308)



A pamphlet titled 'Planning a pregnancy- Tips to help make a healthy baby' has been developed to advise people about recommended vaccinations before, during or after a pregnancy. The information will also be available on websites www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs under 'Immunisation' and www.wch.sa.gov.au

A Midwifery expo was held in August in Adelaide and SAICU presented the 'Importance of Immunisation' including the birth dose hepatitis B. SAICU continues to receive reports from providers and parents about how some health professional's personal beliefs have negatively impacted on the parents decision to consent to the birth dose of Hepatitis B. 'Why I need protection against hepatitis B disease' is a pamphlet to inform parents why babies are offered the hepatitis B vaccine at birth. These can be obtained from SAICU on 8226-7177.

Those born during or since 1966 should be encouraged to have a MMR vaccine before embarking on international travel, if they do not have evidence of having had 2 doses of vaccine in the past. (handbook p187)

A caveat has been included on the ACIR Immunisation History Statement sent to parents after a child's 4th birthday. The statement reads 'This child has received all vaccines required by 5 years of age.' The caveat will appear if: a child is fully immunised, has completed Schedule 6 and is not due or overdue for any antigen; AND the child is NOT on a catch up schedule; or the child does not have Medical Contraindication recorded for any vaccine; or the child is NOT recorded as a conscientious objector.

In some states/territories immunisation is an entry requirement for preschool and school enrolment however in South Australia there is no legislation that supports immunisation as an entry requirement to preschools or schools. Parents can be encouraged to keep this record in a safe place for future reference.

VACCINE DISTRIBUTION ALERT!

Infanrix (DTPa) is currently only due at 4 years of age (as the 18 month DTPa is no longer on the schedule) therefore vaccine orders need to be adjusted accordingly.

Vaccines can be ordered every 2 weeks from the Vaccine Distribution Centre so that adequate stock is maintained. Overstocking can lead to vaccine wastage due to expired stock or cold chain events. Review your recent usage and current stock of vaccines to adapt future orders to the expected need.

In a cold chain event Cold Chain Monitors (CCM) - orange cards can prevent vaccine wastage (and save tax payers money). Therefore we encourage providers to place one CCM on each shelf where vaccines are stored. These can be obtained from your Local Immunisation Coordinator in the Divisions of General Practice or from SAICU 8226-7177.

New developments in the near future: A new vaccine order form is being developed to include the stock in the fridge at the time of the order. The fridge calendars are also being redesigned.

PROFILE

Karyn Fromene & Barb Kinder



Barb and Karyn are members of the Immunisation Team at the Port Adelaide Enfield Council. They both have emergency backgrounds, with Karyn serving a 13 year sentence at the RAH Emergency Department and Barb working for several years in paediatrics in the Middle East at a large Military Hospital. Barb joined the Port Adelaide Enfield Council in May 2003.

The team offers various programs for the community including indigenous, refugee, school based, council clinic and workplace programs.

Karyn is the Chair of the South Australian Immunisation Network (SAIN) which supports immunisation providers as well as representing Local Government on the South Australian Immunisation Forum (SAIF) and the School Based Working Party (SBWP). Karyn is also a preceptor for the University of SA Immunisation Accreditation Course and takes great delight in seeing more nurses entering the immunisation field at this exciting time of new developments in the field.

Both Barb and Karyn thoroughly enjoy their role, offering quality immunisation services for the Community.