Isoniazid prophylaxis and HIV seropositivity

Prophylactic isoniazid effectively decreases the incidence of tuberculosis and delays the onset of HIV-related disease in symptom-free, HIV-positive people. A randomised clinical trial was undertaken involving 58 subjects who took isoniazid and vitamin B6 and 60 who took B6 alone. All subjects were skin tested for reaction to purified protein derivative of tuberculin (PPD).

Interim analysis revealed no significant difference in TB outcome measures. Follow-up was continued for a further two years when the incidence of TB in the isoniazid group was 2.2 versus 7.5 per 100 person-years in those taking B6 alone. Protection was significant for the whole group and for those PPD positive. Isoniazid also delayed progression to HIV disease, AIDS and death. The authors say that isoniazid prophylaxis should be considered for HIV positive, PPD positive individuals and might be appropriate for PPD negative individuals in areas where TB is highly endemic.


H pylori acquired in childhood

Infection with Helicobacter pylori is most likely to occur in childhood, new research suggests.

To determine whether infection with H pylori, which is associated with chronic gastritis, is due to a constant rate of infection in different age groups, or whether most occur in childhood, researchers recruited 115 patients from an endoscopy clinic. H pylori IgG antibodies were measured in two serum samples taken with a mean interval of 11.5 years.

Of the subjects, 56 tested positive at the first visit. During follow-up, two patients became infected. Evidence of infection disappeared in three after gastric surgery, and in a further three due to an unknown cause. Antibody concentrations did not increase with age.


Promote condom use for all sexual relationships

Interventions to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections in prostituting women should address both commercial and non-commercial sexual partnerships.

To measure the prevalence of HIV and to describe risk factors, London researchers recruited 280 prostituting women from the streets, magistrates' courts and a GUM clinic. HIV tests were performed on 228 women.

HIV-1 was found in two women. Reported use of condoms was high for commercial clients but low for non-paying partners; 98 per cent used them with all commercial clients and 12 per cent with non-paying partners. Of 193 women examined for sexually transmitted diseases, 27 had an acute infection. Infection was associated with younger age and increasing numbers of non-paying partners but not with duration of prostitution, number of clients or reports of condom failures. When age and number of non-paying partners were analysed, they remained significantly associated with sexually transmitted disease.


Lost gallstones can lead to intraperitoneal sepsis

If stones are spilled during laparoscopic cholecystectomy they can become the source of intraperitoneal sepsis, researchers warn.

They report a 57-year-old man who underwent laparoscopic cholecystecomy for gallstones. During the procedure his gallbladder perforated and two stones were 'lost' between loops of bowel.

Five months later he was admitted with pain and ultrasound showed an abscess containing the gallstones. This was drained at laparotomy and with antibiotics he recovered uneventfully.

The authors say spilled stones are not always absorbed and should be removed if possible. If perforation occurs bile should be cultured and antibiotics given if appropriate.


Selenium can help in taste disturbance

Giving selenium might be helpful for patients with taste disturbance.

Austrian researchers report a man who had had the problem for 11 months after the withdrawal of a catopril-hydrochlorothiazide drug combination. His taste disturbance was such that all food tasted nauseatingly sweet.

He was prescribed selenium 250μg twice a day. Two weeks later he improved and a week after that the disturbance had disappeared. The frequency of taste disturbance with catopril is 0.1-3 per cent and seems to be dose related. Improvement in this patient suggests that selenium metabolism may be altered in taste dysfunction.