Medical News

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CDC's TB Guidelines to Be Available for Public Comment

Revised federal guidelines for TB control to reduce risk of nosocomial transmission in healthcare facilities are being circulated among CDC advisory panels for comment. After incorporating the latest round of suggestions, the draft guidelines will be published in the *Federal Register* for public comment.

The latest draft emphasizes early identification, worker education, and hierarchy of controls with administrative and engineering controls ranking above personal respiratory protection. The draft also stresses the importance of conducting a risk assessment of one's facility to determine the level of risk for various departments and services so follow-up surveillance is based on the level of risk. Recirculation of air through high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration and the use of ultraviolet germicidal irradiation are listed as possible interim measures for control of airborne contaminants. Specific recommendations for the immunocompromised healthcare worker are provided, including providing voluntary work reassignment options.

Infected Dental Student Sued by Patients

Patients of a Northwestern University Dental School student have filed a class action lawsuit against a dental student and the university for failing to inform them that the student performed invasive dental procedures while HIV-positive. According to the complaint, between July 1990 and May 1991 the dental student had provided dental services to at least 120 members of the public. None of the student's patients have tested HIV-positive. Media representatives from Northwestern University said that there is no evidence to suggest that any of these patients were at risk, given that proper infection control procedures were in place then and now at the dental school.

Eickhoff Receives AHA's Trustee of the Year Award

The American Hospital Association's (AHA) 1993 Trustee of the Year Award was presented to Dr. Theodore Eickhoff of the University of Colorado Health Science Center. This award cites Dr. Eickhoff's achievements in guiding the nation's hospitals in the development of enlightened and scientifically sound policies on hospital epidemiology and critical infection prevention and control issues through his articulate and deliberate voice, wisdom, sound judgment, and talent for wielding forward-looking positions to assure the best health and safety of patients, staff, and the community. His award was presented by AHA President Dick Davidson at the annual convention in Orlando.

Canada Adopts Nationwide Needlestick Surveillance System-EPINet

Canada's Laboratory Centre for Disease Control (LCDC) recently formed the Canadian EPINet National Network to document and analyze blood and body fluid exposures in order to target risk reduction and prevention efforts. The LCDC will become the computer-based repository for EPINet data and the data will be voluntarily submitted by healthcare agencies from across Canada. LCDC will collaborate with the Canadian Hospital Association on this project.

EPINet was developed by safety needle device advocate and researcher Dr. Janine Jagger of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. The data collection form developed for use in the United States will be modified for Canada, and a separate protocol is being established to track individuals with exposures to known sources of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B and C, and other bloodborne pathogens.

This National Network has been endorsed by a number of groups, including the Community and Hospital Infection Control Association (CHICA) and the Canadian Nurses Association.

Physician Errors Common in Treatment of TB

Physician errors in the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis were found to be common and are believed to contribute to the development of multidrug resistance. Drs. Artin Mahmoudi and Michael D. Iseman recently examined the records of all 35 patients with pulmonary tuberculosis admitted to the National Jewish Center in Denver in 1989 and 1990.

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