

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (7) in DH SEB CD/8/50/1

13 June 2011

Dear Doctor,

**Empirical antibiotic treatment of Scarlet Fever due to
Group A Streptococcus**

Further to my letter on 'Increase in Scarlet Fever Cases in Hong Kong' sent to you on 9 June 2011, I would like to update you on the antibiotic resistance pattern of Group A Streptococcus (GAS).

Scarlet fever (SF) is an exotoxin-mediated infection caused by GAS. GAS infections can effectively be treated by appropriate antibiotics. Early use of antibiotics in SF patients will prevent clinical deterioration and complications. Antibiotic treatment also shortens the period of infectivity and will prevent transmission of GAS within 24 hours of treatment. The agent of choice should be either penicillin or first generation cephalosporin.

GAS resistant to macrolide is known to be common in Hong Kong. According to local antibiotic resistance surveillance data from the University of Hong Kong and the Public Health Laboratory Centre of the Centre for Health Protection, about 50% of GAS isolated in 2011 were resistant to erythromycin or clindamycin. All GAS isolates were sensitive to penicillin. If you suspect SF, empirical treatment with penicillin or first generation cephalosporin should be given. Antibiotics belonging to the macrolide group (e.g., erythromycin) would not be appropriate in view of the high proportion of GAS resistant to them.

We would also like to seek your assistance in providing the following health advice to your patients:

- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly;
- Wash hands when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, e.g., after sneezing;
- Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal



- and mouth discharge properly;
- Keep good ventilation; and
- Patients who are suffering from scarlet fever should not go to schools or child care centres until they fully recover.

You are also reminded to report SF cases to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477-2772; Fax: 2477-2770; CENO On-line: <http://www.chp.gov.hk/ceno>) for prompt epidemiological investigations and control measures.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. S K CHUANG)
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