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Follow up after a family based genetic screening programme for familial hypercholesterolaemia: is screening alone enough?

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HSV-1 was found in 751 (70%) of all positive swabs in women < 25 years, 141 (41%) in men < 25 years, 413 (49%) in women ≥ 25 years, and 182 (23%) in men ≥ 25 years.

In 1986-8, 33% (187) of all positive swabs were due to HSV-1, rising progressively to 56% (548) in 1998-2000 (P < 0.0001). A significant rise (P < 0.0001, 1986 v 2000) in the proportion of isolates attributable to HSV-1 occurred in each of the four age and sex subgroups (P < 0.0001) (figure).

Comment

Both the number and percentage of genital HSV-1 infections have risen. Genital infection with HSV-1 is strongly associated with being young (aged < 25 years) and being female.

Explanations include changing host susceptibility and changing sexual behaviour of the population. The population seroprevalence of HSV-1 is falling; increasing numbers of young adults are susceptible to HSV-1 infection.1 As genital tract reactivation of latent HSV-1 infection is infrequent, most new cases of genital HSV-1 infection are likely to be due to oрогenital transmission, but there is no evidence suggesting that oral sex practices have changed substantially.1 The occurrence of HSV-1 infection in women, seen consistently in other studies,1 is unexplained.

These results have three important implications for management. Firstly, patients should be counselled about the more favourable clinical course of genital HSV-1 than of HSV-2 infection; recurrences are generally milder and infrequent. Secondly, subclinical shedding of HSV-1 is less common; this has a direct bearing on the likelihood of transmission.1 Thirdly, preventive strategies for genital herpes should focus on the risk of unprotected oрогenital intercourse, which is frequently perceived as “safe” in the context of sexually transmitted infections.

We thank Geoffrey Clements, previously director of the West of Scotland Specialist Virology Centre.

Contributors: AS initiated and designed the study, analysed and interpreted the results, and wrote the paper. JN and NM analysed and interpreted the results and wrote the paper. GG contributed to the study design and analysis of results. WC contributed to the study design, analysis, and interpretation of the results. AS is guarantor.

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Competing interests: None declared.


(Accepted 3 December 2001)
We divided the people testing positive into two categories: those with an unknown cholesterol concentration or with normal cholesterol without treatment at the time of screening ("newly identified cases") and those known to have hypercholesterolaemia (cholesterol ≥6.5 mmol/l) or being treated for this condition ("confirmed cases").

One hundred and sixty six (77%) participants filled out all three questionnaires. Respondents and people lost to follow up differed in only one characteristic—use of statin (depending on cholesterol level), adherence to diet, and advice to quit smoking and lose weight if necessary; moderate use of statin, without diet or appropriate lifestyle advice; unsatisfactory use of statin, without diet or appropriate lifestyle advice; unsatisfactory use of statin, without diet or appropriate lifestyle advice; unsatisfactory use of statin, without diet or appropriate lifestyle advice; unsatisfactory use of statin, without diet or appropriate lifestyle advice.

Quality of treatment and clinical outcome in people testing positive for familial hypercholesterolaemia. Values are numbers (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follow up</th>
<th>New identified cases (n=41)</th>
<th>Confirmed cases (n=125)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At screening</td>
<td>At follow up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>34 (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol checked</td>
<td>17 (41)*</td>
<td>29 (71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of drugs</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>14 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of statin</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>14 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet</td>
<td>5 (12)*</td>
<td>19 (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle advice</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>34 (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of treatment:†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>10 (24)</td>
<td>20 (48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>31 (76)</td>
<td>16 (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known hypercholesterolaemia</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>10 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol unknown</td>
<td>31 (76)*</td>
<td>9 (22)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>14 (24)</td>
<td>12 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body mass index &gt;27 kg/m²</td>
<td>3 (7)</td>
<td>4 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of clinical outcome:‡</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>5 (12)</td>
<td>15 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>5 (12)</td>
<td>6 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>31 (76)</td>
<td>19 (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NR—not relevant.
†Significant difference in time (P<0.05).
‡Good-use of statin (depending on cholesterol level), adherence to diet, and advice to quit smoking and lose weight if necessary; moderate-use of statin, without diet or appropriate lifestyle advice; unsatisfactory-use of statin, without diet or appropriate lifestyle advice; unsatisfactory use of statin, without diet or appropriate lifestyle advice; unsatisfactory use of statin, without diet or appropriate lifestyle advice; unsatisfactory use of statin, without diet or appropriate lifestyle advice.
§Good—cholesterol <5.5 mmol/l, body mass index <27 kg/m², and non-smoker; moderate—cholesterol ≥5.5 mmol/l or body mass index ≥27 kg/m², smoker, or both; unsatisfactory—cholesterol ≥6.5 mmol/l or unknown, regardless of body mass index or smoking status.

Comment

Both confirmed and newly identified patients benefit from screening for familial hypercholesterolaemia, as their risk status improves and cholesterol lowering treatment is instituted, but in almost half of all cases the achieved level of care does not keep up with current guidelines. Opportunities for improvement towards current guidelines include physician education, better implementation of guidelines, and, especially, an intensification of the link between diagnosis and follow up care in the screening process.

We thank the respondents for their enthusiasm and Marina Umans-Eckenhausen and the genetic field workers of the foundation for tracing hereditary hypercholesterolaemia for their support and help with inclusion of the study population.

Contributors: All authors conceived the study, and MCvM and MEAS collected the data. MCvM, MEAS, and GJB contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the data, and all authors contributed to the preparation of the paper. MCvM is the guarantor.

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Competing interests: None declared.


One hundred years ago

The hygienic spittoon question in France

At a recent meeting of the Paris Académie de Médecine M. Périer presented a report on the utilisation of spittoons in the Gare du Nord. The Académie some time ago made an appeal to the railway companies of France to place spittoons in their stations so that persons who felt inclined to expectorate might do so without danger to their fellows. The Nord Company at once placed spittoons of the pattern recommended by the Académie in its Paris terminus, and engaged trained male nurses to look after them. The spittoons have been available for about a year, but they have been very little used. Some time ago the Académie drew up a code of recommendations for the prophylaxis of tuberculosus, in which naturally the question of expectoration occupied a prominent place. A receptacle of a convenient pattern, which could be carried in the pocket and used without exciting much attention, was recommended. It was expected that the issue of this sanitary charge—for such it was intended to be—would be followed by an immediate abatement of the spitting nuisance, and that the pocket spittoon would quickly come into general use. But alas! for the vanity of the sanitarian’s hopes. Some time after the publication of the document referred to, a member of the Académie of an inquiring turn of mind made a tour of the instrument makers’ and pharmacists’ shops of Paris and asked for the spittoon. Not one of them had it in stock, nor did it appear that there had ever been any demand for it. (BMJ 1902;2:223)