



Issue: Hepatitis A Immunisation

Raised by: Dr Christine Selvey, Centre for Disease Control

Background: The Commonwealth announced in June 2005 that it will fund Hep A vaccination for indigenous children in the NT, Qld, SA and WA. Further background information is available from Centre for Disease Control documents.

Discussion: The question brought to the Best Practice Group is to allow Remote Health contribution to the difficult decision on when to include the Hep A vaccination in the existing immunisation schedule. Vaccination is by a 2 injection course, administered 6 months apart.

Essentially there are two options; either

Option 1

4 injections at 12 months (MMR, Hib, Men C and Hep A);
3 injections at 18 months (Pneumococcal, varicella and Hep A)

Option 2

3 injections at 12 months (MMR, Hib and Men C);
2 injections at 18 months (Hep A and varicella); and
2 injections at 24 months (Hep A and pneumococcal).

There are numerous concerns with either option. The main arguments are around workload and provider and client stress. Clinically, Option 1 is the preferred routine in view of maternal antibodies wearing off at approx 12 months.

Consultation: Consultation has occurred widely prior to referral to the Best Practice Group

References: Impact of hepatitis A vaccination of Indigenous children on notifications of hepatitis A in North Queensland, Hanna, J., Hills, S., and Humphreys, J.; 2004
(available at: www.mja.com.au/public/issues/181_09_011104/han10305_fm.html)

Outcome:

1. Hep A vaccine will be recommended at 12 and 18 months for all indigenous children from 1 Nov 2005.
2. Indigenous children who are 13 - 18 months of age (have already had their 12 month immunisations) on Nov 1 should be vaccinated with 2 doses of hep A vaccine 6 months apart.
3. Children who are 19 months to 5 years of age (have already had 18 month 23vPPV) on Nov 1, should opportunistically be offered 2 doses of Hep A vaccine given 6 months apart.

(More detailed information is being issued by Centre for Disease Control, including new schedules for inclusion in the back cover of all DHCS copies of the CARPA STM)