

Management of liver transplant patients: simple but strong recommendations

Sir,

We read with great interest the article by Drs Halliday and Westbrook (vol. 78(5), 2017, p. 278). The authors highlight numerous management considerations for the general physician in a patient with a liver transplant, but there are simple but noteworthy omissions from their article.

First, patients should be advised to wash their hands frequently every day. This reduces the risk of pathogen acquisition, including *Clostridium difficile* and viral infections. Also, when undertaking any activity involving soil, patients with a liver transplant should wear shoes, socks, long-sleeved shirts and long trousers to avoid pathogen acquisition from the soil (Lucey et al, 2013).

Furthermore, patients with a liver transplant should avoid crowds during periods of maximal immunosuppression to avoid the acquisition of airborne pathogens (Lucey et al, 2013). This helps to reduce the likelihood of developing cytomegalovirus, among many other viral and non-viral pathogens.

Finally, mosquito repellent is recommended in liver transplant recipients to avoid vector-borne disease (Lucey et al, 2013). This is particularly important at peak mosquito feeding times, and when travelling abroad.

All the above recommendations are grade 1 and level A evidence according to the American Society of Transplantation and the American Association for the

Study of Liver Diseases (Lucey et al, 2013). Physicians should advise patients about these aspects as well, given the strength of their recommendation and simplicity of application.

Dev Katarey

*Physician
Brighton and Sussex Medical School
BSMS Teaching Building
University of Sussex
Brighton BN1 9PX
(dev.katarey@bsuh.nhs.uk)*

Irene Francis

*Academic Foundation Year 1 Doctor
Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust
Brighton*

Lucey MR, Terrault N, Ojo L, Hay JE, Neuberger J, Blumberg E, Teperman LW (2013) Long-term management of the successful adult liver transplant: 2012 practice guideline by the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases and the American Society of Transplantation. *Liver Transpl* **19**(1): 3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1002/lt.23566>

Sir,

We are grateful for the interest in our article. The commentators raise important points regarding the education and advice offered to patients following liver transplantation, and we endorse those suggestions.

Recipients undergo a formal programme of pre-, peri- and post-transplant education that helps them to remain well enough to undergo transplantation, to optimize

concordance with medications and to reduce the risk of harm post-transplantation. This covers not only the points raised (although mosquito-borne infectious diseases are not a significant clinical concern for patients remaining in the UK), but also a broad range of topics to improve patient health including avoidance of infection from unpasteurised or raw milk, egg or meat products, avoidance of contact with animal vectors, general nutrition, physical activity and sports, alcohol intake, return to work, travel, the use of seat belts, contraception and a host of other topics.

Owing to the challenge of distilling the overarching themes of the medical care of patients undergoing liver transplantation, we chose to omit details of the education programme in our article. It is important to recognize that these programmes be individualized. However, we do welcome the commentators' efforts to highlight these important elements.

Neil Halliday

*Wellcome Clinical Research Fellow
Institute of Immunity and Transplantation
University College London
London NW3 2PF
(neilhalloway@nhs.net)*

Rachel H Westbrook

*Consultant Hepatologist
Sheila N Sherlock Liver Centre
Royal Free Hospital NHS Trust
London*

Correspondence

If you would like to comment on any of the articles in *British Journal of Hospital Medicine*, please write in no more than 250 words to:

Professor Rob Miller, Editor-in-Chief, BJHM
c/o Rebecca Linssen, MA Healthcare
St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB

BRITISH JOURNAL OF

HOSPITAL MEDICINE

Email: rebecca.linssen@markallengroup.com
Fax: 020 7978 8316