PHARMACOLOGY IN SEXUAL HEALTH

Donna Tilley CNC Sexual Health & Women’s Health

adapted from resources previously developed at Sydney Sexual Health Centre

new south wales sexually transmissible infections programs unit
This topic focuses on the knowledge required to safely administer prescribed and nurse initiated medications commonly used in the sexual health setting.

OBJECTIVE:

Develop a sound knowledge base to deliver medication
Bradford D. (2008: 126) explains: When managing and treating STIs it is useful to understand the natural history of the specific STI you are dealing with; this is especially important where there are no curative treatments available, as is the case with the viral STIs.
Nurses working in this area:

- can administer many of the STI treatments because they are simple and effective
- must have adequate knowledge of drug dosage, side effects and interactions in addition to an overall knowledge of current therapeutics
Nurses working in this area:

- must clinically assess the client including allergy status, contraindications to the medication and possible pregnancy because these conditions may influence the choice of medication

Reference:
2. Quality use of medicines.

- It is important to consider the impact of medication use for a client when treating one or more STIs.

- The goal of the *National Strategy of the Quality Use of Medicines* is to make the best possible use of medicines to improve health outcomes for all Australians. It recognises that many people maintain their health without using medicines, while for others, medicines play an important role in maintaining health, preventing illness and curing diseases such as STIs.
Quality use of medicines is defined as:

(a) **Selecting management options** wisely by:
- considering the place of medicines in treating illness and maintaining health and
- recognising that there may be better ways than medicine to manage many disorders
Quality use of medicines is defined as:

(b) Choosing suitable medicines if a medicine is considered necessary so that the best available option is selected by taking into account:

- the individual
- the clinical condition
- risks and benefits
- dosage and length of treatment
- any co-existing conditions
- other therapies
- monitoring considerations
- costs for the individual, the community and the health system as a whole
Quality use of medicines is defined as:

(c) *Using medicines safely and effectively to get the best possible results by:*

- monitoring outcomes,
- minimising misuse, over-use and under-use, and
- improving people’s ability to solve problems related to medication, such as negative effects or managing multiple medications

Reference:
Government Department of Health and Ageing 2002
*National Strategy of the Quality Use of Medicines.* Available URL:
Activity

This activity demonstrates the importance of having a sound knowledge of the medications you are administering.

1. Choose a medication you are familiar with for the treatment or prevention of STIs. Read the following to note what consumers are informed about the drug you have chosen.

2. Access the Consumer Medication Information factsheet for that medication.

3. Consumer medicine information can be accessed via the web-links provided by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

All health organisations have guidelines for the safe administration of medications. Policies and guidelines are usually determined at the State level.

Each State Health Department will have policy directives to inform and guide practice listed on the Health Department website.

**Reading**
Read the following NSW Health policy, in particular sections 6.4.2 and 6.4.3 which describe who may administer medications and the principles for safe medication administration; and 6.4.9 nurse initiated medication.
The NSW Nurses Association guideline describes what schedule of medication may be approved to be given under Nurse-Initiated medication, Standing orders, Emergency telephone orders and by Nurse Practitioners.

If you are from a state other than NSW, go to your State’s Health Department website and locate the similar documents for medication administration.

Reading
Focus questions

How are the policy directives and guidelines put into practice in the service you work in?

For example:

- What medications are nurses able to nurse initiate?
- When do medications given under a standing order need to be signed?
- What is the accreditation process nurses in your service need to complete to administer medications?
Answer the multiple choice questions for each medication. You must achieve a 100% pass for this assessment.

For each medication you will need to access a Drug Formulary, for example MIMS. Additional references that will assist you to answer the questions for each medication are provided in the following slides.
Azithromycin


Ceftriaxone and Metronidazole

Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccines

National Health and Medical Research Council 2008
The Australian Immunisation
Handbook 9th edn, Department of Health and
Ageing, Canberra. Available URL:

Podophyllotoxin and Liquid Nitrogen (LN2)

Guidelines for the Management of genital HPV in in New Zealand 6th edn, 2010 Professional Advisory
Board (PAB) of the New Zealand HPV Project.
Available URL:
Levonorgestrel (The Emergency Pill)

The following resource is not available online. Please obtain a copy from your nearest family planning organisation.

*Contraception: an Australian clinical practice handbook 2nd edn 2006 Sexual Health and Family Planning, Australia. 119-128*
Further Reading
Other medications given in the sexual health setting include, but are not limited to Human Papilloma Virus vaccination, Penicillin to treat syphilis, hormonal contraceptives and antiviral medication for the management of herpes and HIV infection.
You can find more information about these medications in the following resources:

- Family Planning NSW. n.d.  

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. n.d. Consumer medicine information.

HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs: a guide for primary care 2008 Australasian Society for HIV Medicine, Darlinghurst, NSW. 105-109
5. Final thoughts

Effective, timely and appropriate treatment is essential in the control of sexually transmitted infections.

Nurses need to have an understanding of the natural history of the infection they are treating.

Safe administration of medication includes assessing the client and having knowledge of the actions, contraindications, precautions and side effects of any medication given.
Thank you for viewing this presentation. Please complete the attached multiple choice answer sheet and then forward it to your CNC for marking. The answer sheet can be completed on your computer.