

scan of the spine showed mild swelling of the cervical spinal cord and abnormal increased signal intensity within the cord parenchyma extending from cervical disc between 2nd and 3rd cervical vertebrae, up to just short of conus on TSE T2W and TRIM images. The periphery of the cord displayed isointense signal. Vertebral bodies, intervening discs and surrounding soft tissue were normal. Clinical picture and the MRI findings were suggestive of acute transverse myelitis. The child recovered spontaneously starting from the 5th day of admission and was discharged within 10 days. Methyl prednisolone was not used since symptoms started resolving very fast.

Hepatitis viruses are less commonly reported etiological agents for acute transverse myelitis. Transverse myelitis has been reported with hepatitis A(1), hepatitis B carrier state(2), hepatitis B vaccination(3) and chronic hepatitis C(4). Association with hepatitis E has not been reported earlier.

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Errors in Administration of Combination Antibiotics

Widespread use of β -lactams has led to development of resistant microorganisms because of production of β -lactamases(1,2). To overcome this problem, β -lactams have been combined with β -lactamase inhibitors. The spectrum of activity of each combination is determined by the β lactam. The addition of β -lactamase inhibitor does not decrease the dose of the β -lactam. The ratios of the antimicrobial drug and the enzyme inhibitor in various combinations are: (i) Amoxicillin-clavulanic acid 5 : 1 (in injectible); variable in

oral preparations; (ii) Piperacillin tazobactam 8 : 1; (iii) Cefoperazone-sulbactam 1 : 1; (iv) Ampicillin-sulbactam 2 : 1.

We have come across frequent errors in administration of these combinations. Taking the example of cefoperazone-sulbactam, an instruction is written for a 10 kg child as Inj cefoperazone-sulbactam 300 mg IV 8-hourly (to give 300 mg cefoperazone). The staff takes a vial labeled as 1 g (cefoperazone content 500 mg) and dilutes the same in 10 ml diluent and administers 3 mL. However, this will deliver only 150 mg of cefoperazone. The problem is more likely to occur in pediatric patients who will receive a fraction of the vial.

Similar is the problem with oral combinations such as amoxicillin-clavulanic acid available in India. To overcome this problem, we suggest following solutions: (i) It will be preferable to mention only the amount of active drug in the injection vial/oral preparation prominently and the contents could give the details. For example, vial of a combination of cefoperazone (500 mg)-sulbactam (500 mg), currently labeled as 1 g, could be labeled as 500 mg; (ii) The physicians and nurses should take care while prescribing / administering and should clearly mention / administer the dose of the active compound.

We will like to alert the pediatricians about this error so that they can identify this and take corrective actions.

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How Baby Friendly are the Baby Products?

Recently there has been controversy about baby products of a famous Multinational company. A child in Amaravati, Maharashtra, developed blisters after application of its baby oil. Oil application was stopped and the blisters subsided. Subsequently a complaint was lodged with the FDA (Food and Drug Administration), Maharashtra. It was discovered that a total of thirty-nine complaints were filed with this company from January 2004 to February 2005 for skin reactions following use of baby oil, but the company did not initiate any action.

In this company's baby oil, liquid paraffin amounts to 99.78%, rest being tocopheryl

acetate 0.1%, vitamin A and D3 mixture 0.1%, perfume 0.015%(1). Liquid paraffin is a documented emollient to be applied for rashes, itching and dry skin. It is not massage, oil. But the label on this oil reads "It is ideal massage oil for your baby. Daily massage has clinically shown to benefit baby's growth and development". For baby massage vegetable oils have been shown to be superior to products containing mineral oil(2). Vegetable oils significantly improve growth as well as blood flow as compared to the mineral oil. Vegetable oils are well absorbed from the skin. Further, mineral oils may clog the pores of the skin and can cause allergic reactions. The label on baby oil also claims it is vitamin D enriched whereas its vitamin D content is only 0.1% together with vitamin A and the claim of beneficial effect accruing from such low concentrations could not be substantiated by the company.