

South Australian Perinatal Practice Guidelines

Urinary tract infections in pregnancy

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Literature review

- > Urinary tract infection may present as asymptomatic bacteriuria, acute cystitis (bladder infection) or pyelonephritis (kidney infection) (McCormick et al. 2008)
- > Asymptomatic bacteriuria occurs in 2 % to 10 % of all pregnancies. If untreated, up to 30 % of mothers may develop acute cystitis and up to 50 % acute pyelonephritis (Delzell, Lefevre 2000; Smaill, Vazquez 2007; McCormick et al. 2008)
- > E Coli is the most common pathogen associated with asymptomatic bacteriuria (> 80 % of isolates). Staphylococcus saprophyticus is the second most frequently cultured uropathogen while other Gram-positive cocci, such as group B streptococci, are less common. Other organisms include Gram-negative bacteria such as klebsiella, proteus or enterobacteriaceae (Delzell, Lefevre 2000; McCormick et al. 2008)
- > Asymptomatic bacteriuria has been associated with low birthweight and preterm birth (Smaill, Vazquez 2007)
- > Obstruction to the flow of urine in pregnancy leads to stasis and increases the likelihood that pyelonephritis will complicate asymptomatic bacteriuria (AB) (Smaill, Vazquez 2007)
- > Antibiotic treatment is effective in reducing the risk of pyelonephritis in pregnancy (Smaill, Vazquez 2007)
- > There is no clear consensus in the literature on antibiotic choice or duration of treatment for urinary tract infection (Vazquez, Villar 2003; Villar et al. 2006; Schnarr, Smaill 2008)

Definitions

- > Urinary tract infections in pregnancy are classified as either asymptomatic or symptomatic
- > **Asymptomatic bacteriuria** is defined as true bacteriuria (> 100,000 / mL) in the absence of specific symptoms of acute urinary tract infection
- > **Symptomatic** urinary tract infections are divided into lower tract (acute cystitis) or upper tract (pyelonephritis) infections
 - > **Acute cystitis** is defined as significant bacteriuria with associated bladder mucosal invasion, and is distinguished from asymptomatic bacteriuria by the presence of symptoms such as dysuria, urgency, frequency, nocturia, haematuria and suprapubic discomfort in afebrile women with no evidence of systemic illness (McCormick et al. 2008; Schnarr, Smaill 2008)
 - > **Pyelonephritis** is defined as the identification of at least 100,000 bacteria / mL of a single uropathogen in a midstream MSSU culture with associated inflammation of the renal parenchyma, calices and pelvis in the presence of systemic illness. Symptoms include flank or renal angle pain, pyrexia, rigor, chills, nausea and vomiting (McCormick et al. 2008; Schnarr, Smaill 2008)

Antenatal screening

- > Routine mid stream specimen of urine (MSSU) for all women at 1st visit (booking)

Indications for repeat screening

- > Contaminated specimen
- > History of recurrent infections outside of pregnancy
- > Known and unknown structural abnormality of the urinary tract

Antenatal education

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- > Explain that urinary tract infections are common in pregnancy, the risk beginning in week 6 and peaking during weeks 22 to 24
- > Smooth muscle relaxation leads to decreased bladder and ureteral tone and dilatation of the renal pelvis and ureters, which increases bladder volume, urinary stasis, residual volume and vesicoureteric reflux. Differences in urine pH and osmolality and pregnancy-induced glycosuria and aminoaciduria may facilitate bacterial growth
- > Sexual activity can traumatise the urothelium of the distal urethra, resulting in increased bacterial invasion

Risk factors

- > Low socio-economic status
- > Sickle cell trait
- > Diabetes mellitus
- > Neurogenic bladder retention
- > History of previous urinary tract infections
- > Structural abnormality of urinary tract
- > Presence of renal stones

Diagnosis

- > Quantitative MSSU culture is the only gold standard for diagnosis of ALL suspected urinary tract infections

Asymptomatic bacteriuria

- > > 100,000 bacteria / mL with < 20 white cells, generally indicates asymptomatic bacteriuria
- > A count > 100,000, with 2 or more organisms, indicates a contamination rather than bacteriuria

Acute cystitis

In addition to midstream MSSU, clinical diagnosis is based on symptoms such as:

- > Dysuria, urinary frequency, strangury
- > Lower abdominal pain or supra-pubic pain without fever
- > Pyuria may also be present

Pyelonephritis

Pyelonephritis usually presents as an acute episode. In addition to midstream MSSU, clinical diagnosis should include:

- > Full maternal clinical history and examination
- > Assessment of fetal wellbeing
- > Blood cultures (aerobic and anaerobic)
- > Low and high vaginal swabs
- > Complete blood count, renal function test including creatinine, urea and electrolytes
- > Urinalysis for proteinuria
 - > Women with pyelonephritis often have pyuria or leukocyte casts

- > Symptoms include:
 - > Pyrexia, chills, rigor
 - > Flank or renal angle pain
 - > Nausea and vomiting

ISBN number:
Endorsed by:
Contact:

978-1-74243-108-6
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- > Usually dehydration
- > Less commonly dysuria, frequency
- > Fetal tachycardia may also be present

Treatment

- > Intravenous antibiotic treatment should be guided by urine culture and sensitivity reports
- > Increase fluid intake (may require intravenous fluids if clinically dehydrated)
- > Monitor urine output to assess complete emptying of the bladder (assists antimicrobial treatment)
- > Urinary alkalisers are safe in pregnancy

Asymptomatic bacteriuria

- > Depending on the bacterial sensitivity, commence antibiotics
- > Avoid trimethoprim in the 1st trimester

E coli

- > Cephalexin 500 mg oral twice daily for 10 days

OR

- > Nitrofurantoin 50 mg oral four times a day for 10 days

OR

- > Trimethoprim 300 mg oral daily for 10 days (after first trimester)

OR

- > Amoxicillin+clavulanate 500 + 125 mg oral, twice daily for 10 days (if < 20 weeks of gestation)

Note: In view of childhood outcomes –(ORACLE II trial and 7 year follow-up), which showed an associated increase in necrotising enterocolitis, functional impairment (low), and cerebral palsy, it is recommended that amoxicillin / clavulanate is only used if no alternative treatment is available (Kenyon 2001; Kenyon 2008)

Gram negative bacteria (*Klebsiella*, *proteus*, *enterobacteriaceae*, *pseudomonas*)

- > Norfloxacin 400 mg oral twice daily for ten days
- > Repeat MSSU 48 hours after treatment completed

Group B streptococcus as a single organism

- > Penicillin V 500 mg oral twice daily for 10 days
- > GBS bacteriuria requires IV benzylpenicillin prophylaxis in labour. Give IV benzylpenicillin 3 g loading dose as soon as possible, then 1.2 g IV every 4 hours
 - > If allergic to penicillin, lincomycin 600 mg IV every 8 hours, or azithromycin 500 mg IV once daily are alternatives, preferably prescribed based on sensitivity results from antenatal swabs. For further information see chapter 10 prevention and treatment of neonatal sepsis including maternal Group B Streptococcal colonisation

Acute cystitis

- > Cephalexin 500 mg oral twice daily for 10 days

OR

- > Nitrofurantoin 50 mg oral, 6 hourly for 10 days

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OR

- > Amoxycillin+clavulanate 500 + 125 mg oral, twice daily for 10 days (if < 20 weeks of gestation)

Note: In view of childhood outcomes –(ORACLE II trial and 7 year follow-up), which showed an associated increase in necrotising enterocolitis, functional impairment (low), and cerebral palsy, it is recommended that amoxicillin / clavulanate is only used if no alternative treatment is available (Kenyon 2001; Kenyon 2008)

- > Repeat urine culture at least 48 hours after completion of treatment

Pyelonephritis

- > Admit for antimicrobial treatment
- > Ampicillin monotherapy has fallen into disfavour because of the high incidence of resistant bacteria. Preferred regimens are ampicillin plus gentamicin, or cefazolin, and ceftriaxone which are equally efficacious.
- > Dehydration is common. Administer intravenous fluids and monitor urine output
- > Cooling blankets and antipyretics to alleviate pyrexia as required
- > Monitor for signs of preterm labour and treat accordingly (see chapter 30 Preterm labour)
- > Parenteral treatment should be continued until the woman is afebrile for a minimum of 24 hours

A commonly used antibiotic regimen is:

- > Gentamicin 5 mg / kg intravenously as a single daily dose for 3 days, or until sensitivities are available. Serum levels should be taken if ongoing gentamicin treatment is required.

AND

- > Ampicillin [or amoxycillin] 2 g intravenous initial dose then 1g intravenous every 4 hours for 3 days

OR

- > Cefazolin 1-2 g intravenously every 6 to 8 hours over 3 days

OR

- > Piperacillin 4 g intravenous every 8 hours over 3 days

After 3 days:

- > Cephalexin 500 mg oral 6 hourly for 10 days

OR

- > Trimethoprim 300 mg oral daily for 10 days (after first trimester)

OR

- > Amoxycillin+clavulanate 500 + 125 mg oral twice daily for 10 days (if < 20 weeks of gestation)

Note: In view of childhood outcomes –(ORACLE II trial and 7 year follow-up), which showed an associated increase in necrotising enterocolitis, functional impairment (low), and cerebral palsy, it is recommended that amoxicillin / clavulanate is only used if no alternative treatment is available (Kenyon 2001; Kenyon 2008)

Note: The choice of antibiotic should be based on sensitivity results

Recurrent infections

- > Treat according to bacterial sensitivity
- > Repeat MSSU at every visit
- > Exclude urinary tract anomalies

Antibiotic prophylaxis

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Indicated after 2 or more documented separate episodes of cystitis or pyelonephritis

- > Nitrofurantoin 50 mg oral at night
 - > Caution should be exercised when administering nitrofurantoin at term, or with possible preterm birth, because of the possibility of producing haemolytic anaemia in patients with glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency and due to immature enzyme systems in the early neonatal period

OR

- > Cephalexin 250 mg oral at night

OR

- > Trimethoprim 150mg oral at night (not in first trimester)

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Abbreviations

et al	And others
AB	Asymptomatic bacteriuria
MSSU	Mid stream specimen of urine
E Coli	Escherichia coli
mL	Millilitre/s
mg	Milligram/s

Version control and change history

PDS reference: OCE use only

Version	Date from	Date to	Amendment
1.0	18 May 10	current	Original version