

WORLD CONGRESS ON RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE

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Title: Use of Alternative Drugs for Rheumatic Fever Prophylaxis in Place of Injection Benzathine Penicillin

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Background & Aims: The non availability of injection, poor compliance and increasing reluctance of general practitioner to give penicillin injection for fear of anaphylaxis of time-tested injection penicillin for chronic prophylaxis of rheumatic fever leads to the exploration of other suitable alternatives in our Country for both admitted and out-patients in most of the major tertiary care hospitals and District head quarter Hospitals.

Methods: 160 patients both newly diagnosed and those already taking prophylaxis were included in this study. 100 were given injection benzathine penicillin and 60 were given azithromycin 500 mg 3days a week for 2 years.

Results: The study revealed about 40% of those taking injection penicillin missed their doses compared to 30% in the azithromycin group: 18% of the patients did not turn up during follow-up compared to 10% in azithromycin group. three patients developed recurrence of rheumatic fever in azithromycin group. Among the causes of non-compliance in penicillin group were non-availability of the drug (78%), fear of injection (55%), pain (50%), and non-availability of doctors/centre for administration of injection. In the azithromycin group causes of non-compliance were cost of therapy (30%). lack of motivation (45%), side effects (10%) and non-availability of the drug in some villages and lack of awareness for compliance of drug. Even though 3 cases of rheumatic fever occurred in the azithromycin group. the compliance was better, and side-effects were minimal compared to injection penicillin.

Conclusions: The prohibitive factor was lack of awareness and cost of therapy; the use of azithromycin 500 mg. 3 days a week is proving to be sufficient to prevent new attacks of rheumatic fever.