The Case of Pauline Armstrong

Introduction

Class today begins in lecture with the experiences of third and fourth year students who have experienced Needlestick and/or other supervision issues in their first clinical experiences. In section, you will continue to discuss the case of Pauline Armstrong, making use of the research you did since last week. At the end of class, you should be able to justify your advice to Pauline on what you consider the best course of action in her situation.

Relevance

There are several layers to this unit. The first deals with how medical students are prepared practically and personally to face an occupational hazard. The second concerns the ethics and personal skills involved in caring for a possibly infected person, engaging their assistance in helping you to protect your own health.

Objectives

At the end of this unit you should be able to:
1. List and understand the procedures followed at UH after a needle stick accident especially:
   - Report
   - Prophylaxis
   - Insurance coverage
   - Liability / Responsibility
2. Explain the rights of HIV patients and exposed health care providers and the legal duties of physicians regarding informed consent, confidentiality, mandatory testing, and test report
3. Be able to distinguish ethical and legal issues in AIDS testing of adults, newborns, and pregnant women.

Preparation

1. Use the readings from the resource page as a starting point for your preparation.

Process

1. Discuss the student presentations.
2. Discuss the study questions for this unit. All the information is important for anyone in clinical care and you should be able to answer them thoroughly from your preparation.
3. If you were to prepare a statement for the student handbook on how to obtain proper supervision what advice would you give to other medical students.

Study Questions

Last updated on: 9/23/2009
1. What is the risk that Anna Valle has AIDS and if she does what is the risk that Pauline will become infected with HIV? How does this risk compare to the risk of other commonly transmitted risks?

2. What preventive health measures are appropriate for medical students?
   - What should Pauline have done to prepare for work in any clinical setting? In order to participate in an operating room? In an operation?
   - What are "universal precautions"? Are they effective?
   - Do students use universal precautions? Why or why not?
   - Who should provide and who should pay for preventive health measures for students? Should medical students be treated differently than any other students who might be at risk, e.g. nursing or physical therapy students?

3. Was Pauline properly supervised?
   - Who is responsible for supervising a medical student?
   - What should the attending or hospital staff have done differently?
   - Was anyone negligent in their supervision of Pauline?

4. Who bears the responsibility for Pauline's accident? Who pays for Pauline's tests and follow up?

5. Why should Pauline care about the confidentiality of Ms. Valle's medical records?
   - Can she secure an HIV test for Ms. Valle without her consent?
   - What are the consequences -- social, professional, personal -- of disclosure of a positive HIV test for a patient like Ms. Valle?
   - Are the consequences any different for a medical student like Pauline?
   - What measures are taken to protect confidentiality of medical records in general? Of HIV status in particular? Are they effective? Who has access to HIV test results?

6. What conditions or test results are reportable:
   - to the state?
   - or a hospital?
   - or an employer?
   - or a sexual partner?

7. What are the professional consequences of HIV infection? Can an infected physician continue to practice? Cf. News examples

**Articles on CBase**

SUNY SOM Blood Pathogens Policy
My Injury-Your Blood, Jack Coulehan, Hastings Center Report 2005

**Resource Links**

CDC
- Info site on Blood Borne Pathogens

New Your State Websites
- HIV Prophylaxis Following Occupational Exposure (New York State site)
- NYS HIV guidelines site

SUNYSB Policies and Procedures Website
- Incident Reporting (HR:0016)
- HIV consent, testing and counseling for pregnant women and newborns (RI:0019)
HIV Testing, Consent and Counseling (PC:0045)
Confidentiality of Employee Health Records (See Section IM)