

Bulletin Board

Hand luggage

Each year, hundreds of Canadian health care professionals take part in short-term overseas relief and development projects. Health Partners International of Canada has developed a special Physician Travel Pack (PTP) for physicians working in situations where medicine is not readily available. The PTP, designed by Canadian doctors with extensive overseas relief experience, contains about \$5000 (wholesale value) of essential drugs and medical supplies that can treat up to 1000 children and adults. Consisting of 2 boxes (weighing a total of 32 kg) with carrying handles, the pack includes antibiotics, antiparasitics, analgesics, vitamins, eye and ear drops, and much more. These drugs and medical supplies are donated by Canada's health care industry.

You can request a PTP by applying on-line at www.hpicanada.ca. If your application is approved, the PTP will be shipped directly to your Canadian address. A contribution of \$550 per pack is requested to cover a portion of the costs related to sourcing, processing, assembling, and shipping a PTP.

A convenient truth

Both oral and intravaginal antifungal treatments are available for vulvovaginal candidiasis. Women can now purchase intravaginal therapies over-the-counter, but some prefer the convenience of oral therapy. Which works better? A recent Cochrane review looked at this question.

The authors did a systematic review of the literature, ending up with a total of 19 trials reporting 22 oral versus intravaginal antifungal comparisons. No statistically significant differences for clinical cure in the short-term or mycological cure were found between the 2 treatment formats. There was a small difference in long-term cure in favour of oral therapy (odds ratio 1.29; 95% confidence interval 1.05-1.60), but it was not clear whether this result had any clinical significance. Two trials each reported 1 withdrawal from treatment due to an adverse reaction.

The authors conclude that there is no clear advantage of one format over the other. They recommend that the choice of oral versus intravaginal antifungal treatments should take into consideration cost, safety, and treatment preference. Among women with no history of adverse reactions to a particular therapy, the higher cost of the oral therapy should be weighed against the gain in convenience.

Source: Nurbhai M, Grimshaw J, Watson M, Bond C, Mollison J, Ludbrook A. Oral versus intra-vaginal imidazole and triazole anti-fungal treatment of uncomplicated vulvovaginal candidiasis (thrush). *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2007;(17):CD002845.

Canadian Adverse Reaction Newsletter

The latest *Canadian Adverse Reaction Newsletter* is available on-line at www.healthcanada.gc.ca/carn. Topics covered in this issue include the following:

- intravenous immune globulin—myocardial infarction and cerebrovascular and thrombotic adverse reactions;
- case presentation—NuvaRing and aortic thrombosis;
- Canada Vigilance;
- Evra—myocardial infarction and thromboembolic adverse reactions;
- summary of advisories posted by Health Canada from August 17 to November 10, 2007.

Advisories are available at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/medeff/advisories-avis/index_e.html. To receive this newsletter and health product advisories free by e-mail, join Health Canada's MedEffect mailing list. Go to www.healthcanada.gc.ca/medeffect.

Bulletin canadien des effets indésirables

Le numéro le plus récent du *Bulletin canadien des effets indésirables* est disponible à www.santecanada.gc.ca/bcei. Dans ce numéro:

- immunoglobulines intraveineuses—infarctus du myocarde et effets indésirables cérébrovasculaires et thrombotiques;
- présentation de cas—NuvaRing et thrombose aortique;
- Canada Vigilance;
- Evra—infarctus du myocarde et effets indésirables thromboemboliques;
- sommaire des avis affichés par Santé Canada du 17 août au 10 novembre 2007.

Les avis sont disponibles à www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/medeff/advisories-avis/index_f.html. Pour recevoir gratuitement par courriel le Bulletin et les Avis sur les produits de santé; inscrivez-vous à la liste MedEffet. Rendez-vous à l'adresse www.santecanada.gc.ca/medeffect.

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Help wanted

Patients who are HIV-positive are needed to participate in HIV clinical trials. These trials are the most effective way to assess whether the benefits of a particular treatment or procedure outweigh its risk and if it will prevent transmission of HIV or improve quality of life. Some trials provide early access to experimental therapies.

The Canadian HIV Trials Network (CTN) has a database with a list of current trials and recruitment details, as well as brief descriptions of the results of completed trials. The 4 core research areas for CTN are antiretroviral therapies, clinical management science, concurrent diseases and vulnerable populations, and vaccines and immunotherapies. For more information, visit the CTN website at www.hivnet.ubc.ca or call 800 661-4664.

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