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IN BRIEF

OESOPHAGUS

Managing oesophageal burns in children

Ingestion of caustic substances can cause oesophageal burns. Whether corticosteroids should be used to prevent the development of strictures in these children is controversial. In a study of 83 children with grade IIb oesophageal burns, 42 received methylprednisolone, ranitidine, ceftriaxone and parenteral nutrition (study group) and 41 received the same regimen but without methylprednisolone (control group). Strictures developed in four children in the study group and 12 in the control group, which is a significant difference. Thus, high doses of methylprednisolone are effective in the management of patients with oesophageal burns.

Original article Usta, M. *et al.* High doses of methylprednisolone in the management of caustic esophageal burns. *Pediatrics* doi:10.1542/peds.2013-3331

DIAGNOSIS

Polarization gating spectroscopy to detect pancreatic cancer

A new study has evaluated the feasibility and efficacy of using a fibreoptic probe containing polarization gating spectroscopy technology to diagnose patients with pancreatic adenocarcinoma by detecting microvascular changes. The study included 14 patients with pancreatic adenocarcinoma and 15 patients without cancer. Spectroscopic measurements were taken (at five locations) of variables indicative of microvascular changes, such as blood vessel radius and deoxyhaemoglobin concentration. Significant differences were found between the two groups, suggesting that this technique is feasible and can differentiate patients with and without pancreatic adenocarcinoma.

Original article Patel, M. *et al.* Polarization gating spectroscopy of normal-appearing duodenal mucosa to detect pancreatic cancer. *Gastrointest. Endosc.* doi:10.1016/j.gie.2014.03.031

VIRAL HEPATITIS

Updated recommendations for HBV screening

The US Preventive Services Task Force have now updated their 2004 recommendations for screening for HBV infection in nonpregnant adolescents and adults. After reviewing the evidence of the risks and benefits of antiviral treatment, the benefits of education and behavioural counselling and the association between immediate and clinical outcomes after therapy, the Task Force recommends that people at high risk of infection should be screened for HBV infection.

Original article LeFevre, M. L. *et al.* Screening for hepatitis B virus infection in nonpregnant adolescents and adults: U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. *Ann. Intern. Med.* doi:10.7326/M14-1018

SURGERY

Reducing risk of postoperative pancreatic fistula

A randomized, double-blind trial in 300 patients has shown that 900 µg subcutaneous pasireotide is more effective than placebo for preventing pancreatic fistula after pancreatic resection. The regimens began on the morning of the operation and continued for 7 days. Fistula occurred less often in patients who received pasireotide than in the placebo group (9% versus 21%), suggesting that perioperative treatment with pasireotide can reduce the incidence of postoperative pancreatic fistula.

Original article Allen, P. J. *et al.* Pasireotide for postoperative fistula. *N. Engl. J. Med.* doi:10.1056/NEJMoa1313688