Clinical Capsules

Predicting STIs in Adolescents

In a prospective cohort study of 11,594 adolescents, those who believed that their parents strongly disapproved of adolescent sex had a significantly lower rate of sexually transmitted infection (5.5%), compared with those who believed that their parents' disapproval was moderate (8.0%) or low (8.9%), said Carol A. Ford, M.D., of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her colleagues.

The data were collected as part of the ongoing National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. All students who participated in the first wave of that study as 7th-12th graders in 1995 were invited to participate in the follow-up approximately 6 years later, and 81% responded (Arch. Pediatr. Adolesc. Med. 2005;159:657-64).

Overall, 6.2% of the respondents tested positive for a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Approximately half of the study population was white (54.2%) and female (52.8%).

Early Asthma and Behavior

In a prospective, longitudinal study of 5,135 children, those who had developed asthma or bronchitis by age 5 years were significantly more likely to have internalizing behavior problems at age 14 years, reported Rosa Alati, Ph.D., of the University of Queensland (Australia) and her colleagues (Psychosom. Med. 2005;67:462-70).

The children's mothers completed the Child Behavior Checklist at 5 years and 14 years, and the children completed the Youth Self-Report at age 14 years. The mothers' reports suggested that the odds of internalizing behavior at age 14 were twice as high in children who had asthma/bronchitis at age 5 for both boys and girls, but based on the adolescents' own reports, early asthma had a significant effect on adolescent internalizing behavior in boys but not in girls.

The subscales of internalizing behavior showed that the strongest associations were for somatic and anxiety/depression symptoms in boys and somatic symptoms in girls. However, internalizing behavior at 5 years was not associated with the development of asthma at age 14 years.

Teachers Report on Atomoxetine

Children aged 8-12 years with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder who took a once-daily dose of atomoxetine showed a significant reduction in symptoms after 7 weeks, reported Margaret Weiss, M.D., of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and her associates.

The randomized, placebo-controlled study was sponsored in part by Eli Lilly & Co. (J. Am. Acad. Child Adolesc. Psychiatry 2005;44:647-55). Overall, the mean changes from baseline on the problem behavior subscale of the Social Skills Rating System-Teacher test and the Conners Global Index-Teacher test were significantly greater in the patients taking atomoxetine, compared with those taking a placebo. Adverse events were generally mild and gastrointestinal, similar to those observed in studies of twice-daily doses.

Metoclopramide Treats Tourette's

A daily dose of metoclopramide decreased tic severity by 38.7% in children aged 7-18 years with Tourette's disorder, compared with a 12.6% reduction in a placebo group, reported Rob Nicholson, M.D., of the University of Western Ontario in London, and his colleagues.

In a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study of 27 children, 14 received metoclopramide starting at 5 mg daily, titrated as needed to a maximum 40-mg daily dose, and 13 received a placebo (J. Am. Acad. Child Adolesc. Psychiatry 2005;44:640-6).

The average dose after 8 weeks was 32.9 mg. Adverse events were mild; the most common was increased appetite, but weight gain did not differ significantly from that in the placebo group. One patient had a 30-fold increase in prolactin levels that resolved with discontinuation of the drug at the study's end.

Teens Embrace Alternative Medicine

In a cross-sectional survey of 401 adolescents aged 12-18 years, 68.1% reported using one or more forms of alternative or complementary medicine, said Carie A. Braun, Ph.D., of the College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, Minn., and her associates. Overall, 27.2% of the adolescents reported using herbal medicines, 26.7% reported using massage therapy, and 21.7% reported taking megavitamins (J. Adolesc. Health 2005;37:76.e1-9). Most of the adolescents (66.3%) said "alleviation of physical pain" was their desired outcome from the alternative treatments.

The survey mentioned 19 therapies, including chiropractic, herbal medicine, acupuncture, hypnosis, spiritual healing, and megavitamins. Of note, only 13.8% of the adolescents disclosed their use of alternative therapies to their health care providers, even though 37.9% of those who reported taking megavitamins or nutritional supplements were also taking prescription medications.

—Heidi Splete