

Genital Herpes Simplex: Review Questions

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QUESTIONS

Choose the single best answer for each question.

- Approximately how many clinical visits in the United States each year involve genital herpes-related illness?**
 - 50,000
 - 100,000
 - 500,000
 - 1,000,000
 - 2,000,000
- What portion of the US population has serologic evidence of prior herpes simplex type 2 infection?**
 - 4%
 - 8%
 - 13%
 - 17%
 - 22%
- Which of the following statements regarding the transmission of genital herpes is correct?**
 - Absence of lesions means that transmission of the disease is not possible
 - Condoms are effective in decreasing the transmission of the disease
 - Crusted lesions are not infectious
 - Lesions from recurrences are less infectious than are primary lesions
 - Suppressive antiviral therapy of genital herpes prevents viral transmission
- Antiviral regimens that are appropriate for the treatment of an initial episode of genital herpes include each of the following EXCEPT:**
 - Acyclovir 200 mg orally 5 times daily for 7 to 10 days
 - Acyclovir 400 mg orally 3 times daily for 7 to 10 days
 - Famciclovir 250 mg orally 3 times daily for 7 to 10 days
 - Ganciclovir 1000 mg orally 3 times daily for 7 to 10 days
 - Valacyclovir 1 g orally twice daily for 7 to 10 days
- Antiviral regimens that are appropriate for the treatment of a recurrence of genital herpes include each of the following EXCEPT:**
 - Acyclovir 5% ointment applied to lesions 5 times daily for 5 days
 - Acyclovir 400 mg orally 3 times daily for 5 days
 - Acyclovir 800 mg orally twice daily for 5 days
 - Famciclovir 125 mg orally twice daily for 5 days
 - Valacyclovir 500 mg orally twice daily for 5 days
- Which of the following characterizations of chronic antiviral suppression for recurrent genital herpes is correct?**
 - Appropriate for patients who have 6 or more recurrences per year
 - Effective with once-daily dosing for all antiviral agents
 - Ineffective if lesions are caused by herpes simplex type 1 infection
 - Recommended after severe initial episodes of genital herpes
 - Responsible for antiviral resistance in immunocompetent patients

(turn page for answers)

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EXPLANATION OF ANSWERS

1. (C) **500,000.** In addition to the 500,000 annual office visits, approximately 2 million pharmacy claims for genital herpes-related illness are made annually. Yearly direct costs for genital herpes care in the United States total approximately \$200 million.
2. (E) **22%.** Approximately 45 million Americans have serologic evidence of herpes simplex type 2 infection, representing an increase of approximately 30% over the last 20 years.
3. (B) **Condoms are effective in decreasing the transmission of the disease.** Condoms, when properly used, are most likely the most effective means of preventing herpes transmission. Viral shedding may occur in the absence of lesions. All lesions, whether crusted or not, may be infectious. Lesions from initial or recurrent episodes of genital herpes are equally prone to transmit the virus. Antiviral suppressive therapy can decrease, but not eliminate, viral shedding.
4. (D) **Ganciclovir 1000 mg orally 3 times daily for 7 to 10 days.** Ganciclovir is not indicated for use in genital herpes. The other 4 regimens are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for treating initial episodes of genital herpes.
5. (A) **Acyclovir 5% ointment applied to lesions 5 times daily for 5 days.** Topically applied acyclovir is indicated only for initial episodes of genital herpes. This treatment has little or no effect on recurrences of the disease. All of the other regimens listed are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for treatment of recurrent genital herpes.
6. (A) **Appropriate for patients who have 6 or more recurrences per year.** Daily suppressive antiviral therapy reduces recurrences of genital herpes by at least 75% in persons who have 6 or more recurrences per year. Valacyclovir may be given once daily as suppression (at doses of 500 or 1000 mg), but acyclovir (400 mg) and famciclovir (250 mg) require twice-daily dosing. Antiviral suppression is also effective for prevention of recurrent genital lesions caused by herpes simplex type 1 infection. Severe initial episodes of genital herpes do not predict more frequent or severe recurrences. Suppressive therapy has been shown, in rare cases, to cause antiviral resistance in immunosuppressed patients but not in immunocompetent patients.

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