
Abstract:
BACKGROUND: Outpatient and home parenteral antimicrobial therapy (OHPAT) is becoming increasingly commonplace in the UK, enabling those patients who would previously have been obliged to remain in hospital for intravenous treatment to be managed as outpatients or in their own homes. The OHPAT service at St Mary’s Hospital, London, was established in 2004. This paper describes the types of infection, antimicrobial management and outcomes of patients referred to the service in the 3.5 years since its inception.

PATIENTS AND METHODS: All inpatients were eligible for OHPAT, provided that they had a serious infection requiring parenteral therapy, were well enough to leave hospital and fulfilled other criteria. We initially used an outpatient clinic model, but as the service developed, treatment was often delivered in patients’ homes, with the OHPAT team providing training and assessment of primary care staff.

RESULTS: Four hundred and sixty-seven patients were referred to the service between September 2004 and April 2008. Of these, 273 received 303 courses of OHPAT, 48 were discharged on oral therapy and 3 patients declined outpatient therapy; the remaining 143 patients were deemed unsuitable for inclusion, most commonly because the patient was too unwell for discharge (28.7%) or their social situation was inappropriate (14.7%). Causative organisms were identified in two-thirds of cases, with methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus implicated in one-third of these. Mean treatment length was 24 days (range 1-165 days), with 7394 inpatient bed-days saved. Less than 5% of patients were readmitted within 28 days with infection- or drug-related problems. There were no cases of Clostridium difficile-associated diarrhoea during or after outpatient treatment, despite extensive use of cephalosporins and other broad-spectrum agents. Patients found the service highly satisfactory and felt that it had improved their quality of life during the treatment period.

CONCLUSIONS: The introduction of the OHPAT service at St Mary’s Hospital has proved to be of benefit to patients and hospital efficiency alike.