



Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care Clinical Effectiveness Unit

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MEMBERS' ENQUIRY RESPONSE

Enquiry Reference: 2055

**Sent: 17 September 2007
Prepared: 17 September 2007**

A: Question

For women with recurrent pancreatitis and Grade 4-6 liver fibrosis secondary to alcohol misuse can the progestogen-only implant be used as a safe and effective method of contraception?

B: Response

The UK *Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use* (UKMEC) provides recommendations for the safe use of contraception for women with specific medical conditions. Pancreatitis is not included as a risk category, liver disease is included (hepatitis, cirrhosis and tumour). Liver fibrosis is not included as a specific category and in itself is largely asymptomatic but it can progress into cirrhosis when the fibrosis alters the architecture and impairs liver function. When counselling about contraception consideration should be given to the risk of pregnancy, the effect pregnancy may have on disease and the effect the progestogen-only implant may have on the disease.

Recommendations may be extrapolated from UKMEC to give some guidance. For women with decompensated cirrhosis (abnormal liver function tests (LFTs)) use of progestogen-only methods are given a category 3 (risks may outweigh benefits). In this situation the use of a progestogen-only implant may not usually be recommended however, it may be considered with clinical judgement and or referral to a specialist contraceptive provider if other methods are unacceptable. For women with compensated cirrhosis (normal LFTs) the progestogen-only implant is a safe option (UKMEC 2 benefits outweigh risks). There is no advice given on monitoring of LFTs.

For women with fibrosis and normal LFTs the use of the progestogen-only implant may be considered. As the disease is progressive monitoring may need to be performed to ensure continued use is appropriate. For women with abnormal LFTs the risk and benefit profile of using progestogen-only implants need to be considered individually against the risk of pregnancy.

C: Evidence-Based Medicine Question *(which guided our literature search strategy)*

Population: women with recurrent pancreatitis and Grade 4-6 liver fibrosis secondary to alcohol misuse

Intervention: progestogen-only implant

Outcome: safety; effect on disease process

Keywords: *progestogen-only implant; pancreatitis ; liver fibrosis; alcohol misuse; 2055*

D: Information Sources

The CEU searched the following sources in developing this Member's Enquiry Response

Source Searched	Information Identified
Existing FFPRHC and RCOG guidance	No relevant information
The National Guidelines Clearing House	No relevant information
The UK Medical Eligibility Criteria 2005/2006 and WHO and UK Selected Practice Recommendations For Contraceptive Use, 2002	See below
The Cochrane Library	No relevant information
MEDLINE and EMBASE from 1996 to 2005	No relevant information

E: Evidence Reviewed

Liver fibrosis, in itself is largely asymptomatic but it can progress into cirrhosis when the fibrosis alters the architecture and impairs liver function.

The UK *Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use* (UKMEC) provides recommendations for the safe use of contraception for women with specific medical conditions.¹ Pancreatitis is not included as a risk category. Although liver disease is included (hepatitis, cirrhosis and tumour) **fibrosis is not** included as a specific category. Consideration should be given to the risk of pregnancy, the effect pregnancy may have on disease and the effect the progestogen-only implant may have on the disease.

Although there is no information directly related to women with recurrent pancreatitis and grade 4-6 liver fibrosis secondary to alcohol misuse we may extrapolate advice from UKMEC on other forms of liver disease in particular cirrhosis. For women with decompensated cirrhosis (abnormal liver function tests LFTs) use of progestogen-only methods are given a category 3 (risks may outweigh benefits). In this situation the use of a progestogen-only implant may not usually be recommended however, it may be considered with clinical judgement and or referral to a specialist contraceptive provider if other methods are unacceptable. For women with compensated cirrhosis (normal LFTs) the progestogen-only implant is likely to be a safe option (UKMEC 2 benefits outweigh risks). There is no advice given on monitoring of LFTs.

For women whose LFTs are normal use of the progestogen-only implant may be considered. For women with abnormal LFTs the risk and benefit profile of using progestogen-only implants need to be considered individually against the risk of pregnancy.

F: References

1 Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care Clinical Effectiveness Unit. UK Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use. <http://www.ffprhc.org.uk/admin/uploads/UKMEC200506.pdf>. 2006.

The advice given in this Member's Enquiry Response has been prepared by the FFPRHC Clinical Effectiveness Unit team. It is based on a structured search and review of published evidence available at the date of preparation. The advice given here should be considered as guidance only. Adherence to it will not ensure a successful outcome in every case and it may not include all acceptable methods of care aimed at the same results. This response has been prepared as a service to FFPRHC members, but is not an official Faculty guidance product; Faculty guidance is produced by a different and more lengthy process. It is not intended to be construed or to serve as a standard of medical care. Such standards are determined on the basis of all clinical data available for an individual case and are subject to change as scientific knowledge advances. Members are welcome to reproduce this Response by photocopying or other means, in order to share the information with colleagues.

Enquiry response by SB