

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride

HSS(MD)29/2007



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÄNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

To:

Chief Executives HSS Boards & HSC Trusts
Directors of Public Health HSS Boards
Medical Directors HSC Trusts for cascade to:
Consultant Obstetricians
Consultant GUM Physicians
Consultant Paediatricians and Neonatologists
Consultant Virologists and Microbiologists
Directors of Nursing HSS Boards
Directors of Nursing HSC Trusts for cascade to:
All Midwives
Paediatric Nursing Staff
GUM Nursing Staff

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9052 0563
Fax: 028 9052 0574
Email: michael.mcbride@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(MD)29/2007
Date: 23 November 2007

Dear Colleague

GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF SYPHILIS POSITIVE PREGNANT WOMEN AND THEIR INFANTS

Summary

Northern Ireland guidelines for the management of syphilis positive pregnant women and their infants have been developed by a multiprofessional subgroup of the DHSSPS Regional Antenatal Infections Screening Group. They are available on the Department's website at

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/php/health_promotion/public_health_sexualhealth.htm

All Health and Social Services Trusts should ensure the guidelines are implemented within their Maternity Units.

Background

All pregnant women should routinely be offered screening for syphilis infection as part of the booking process. The aim of antenatal screening is to detect and treat maternal syphilis in order to minimise the risk of syphilis related illness to both mother and baby.

The CMO updates, number 24 and 26, have highlighted the increasing number of people diagnosed with syphilis and the risk of syphilis in pregnant women. In recent years a number of pregnant women in Northern Ireland have been diagnosed with the infection.

Syphilis infection in pregnancy is serious and if not treated early can result in miscarriage, stillbirth, intrauterine growth retardation, hydrops fetalis, premature birth and a congenitally infected baby. Prompt recognition of an infected mother is dependent

on screening early in pregnancy. This allows treatment to be started early and so reduce the risk of an adverse outcome.

There should be an interdisciplinary approach to the effective assessment and management of syphilis in pregnancy and any baby born with congenital syphilis, involving obstetricians, genito-urinary medicine specialists, neonatologists and paediatric infectious disease specialists. Syphilis positive pregnant women and their infants should be managed as per the attached guidelines. All care should also meet with the DHSSPSNI Quality Standards for Health and Social Care.

A copy of these Syphilis Management Guidelines has also been forwarded to RQIA to assist them in their clinical and social care governance reviews.

Action

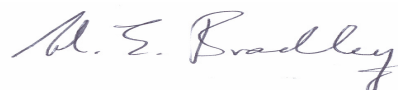
HSS Trusts are asked to implement these guidelines within their organisation to ensure that syphilis positive pregnant women receive safe and effective management of their pregnancy and infection. It is important that all relevant staff are made aware of the guidelines and manage syphilis positive women in accordance with them. Chief Executives are asked to confirm by 31 March 2008 that the guidelines are fully implemented within their Trust. Confirmation should be indicated to:

Ms Jackie McGeagh,
Regional Antenatal Screening Coordinator,
Room C4.17,
Castle Buildings,
Stormont,
Belfast BT4 3SQ.

Yours sincerely



DR MICHAEL McBRIDE
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER



MR MARTIN BRADLEY
CHIEF NURSING OFFICER

cc: Chief Executive RQIA
Members of the Regional Antenatal Infection Screening Group
Professor James McElnay, Dean Medicine, Health and Life Sciences, QUB
Professor Patrick Johnston, Head of School, Medicine and Dentistry, QUB
Professor Hugh McKenna, Dean Life and Health Sciences, UU
Professor Jean Orr CBE, Head of School, Nursing and Midwifery, QUB
Dr Terry McMurray, Chief Executive, NIMDTA
Dr Maura Briscoe, Director of Safety, Quality and Standards Directorate, DHSSPS

This letter is available at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk and also on the DHSSPS Extranet which can be accessed directly at <http://extranet.dhsspsni.gov.uk> or by going through the HPSS Web at <http://www.n-i.nhs.uk> and clicking on DHSSPS.