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Title: An observational study assessing the practice of long-term azithromycin prescription in bronchiectasis

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Body: Introduction Azithromycin is an effective prophylactic antibiotic in non-CF bronchiectasis.¹ However, it is known to cause side effects including hearing loss and liver dysfunction, necessitating appropriate patient monitoring. In addition, some experts advocate periods of temporary cessation of treatment, “azithromycin holidays”, to minimise potential toxicity. We have examined our use of azithromycin and how we screen for complications in our specialist non-CF bronchiectasis clinic. Methods Data was collected on all patients with non-CF bronchiectasis who attended our specialist clinic over a 3-month period commencing 07/11/2011. In those patients receiving long-term azithromycin, we collected data on parameters including liver function tests (LFTs), audiology testing and advice given regarding “azithromycin holidays” over the previous 12-month period. Results Seventy patients were studied, of whom 28 (40%) were prescribed long-term azithromycin. Of these, 7 (25%) had been on azithromycin for less than 12 months. Twenty three (82%) patients on long-term azithromycin had had LFTs and 1 (3.5%) had had audiology testing in the preceding 12 months. Four (17%) of the patients treated for more than 12 months had had an “azithromycin holiday” in the preceding 12-month period. Conclusion Monitoring of LFTs was satisfactory in our treatment group but more attention could be paid to audiology testing and the possibility of “azithromycin holidays”. Work to raise awareness of optimal practice in long-term azithromycin prescribing in non-CF bronchiectasis is needed. 1. Davies G, Wilson R. Prophylactic antibiotic treatment of bronchiectasis with azithromycin. *Thorax*. Jun 2004;59(6):540-1.