

Herpes Viruses: HSV and VZV in Immunocompetent and Immunosuppressed Patients

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7/25/2025

1



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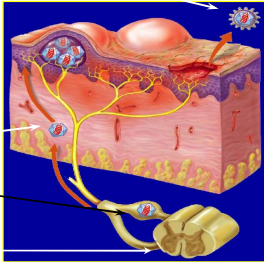
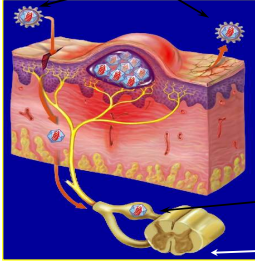
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Herpes Viruses: The Family

- Herpes simplex virus, type 1 (HSV-1)
- Herpes simplex virus, type 2 (HSV-2)
- Varicella zoster virus (VZV)
- Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
- Epstein Barr virus (EBV)
- Human herpesvirus 6 (HHV 6 A and B)
- Human herpesvirus 7 (HHV 7)
- Human herpesvirus 8 (HHV 8)

3

Viral Latency and Reactivation

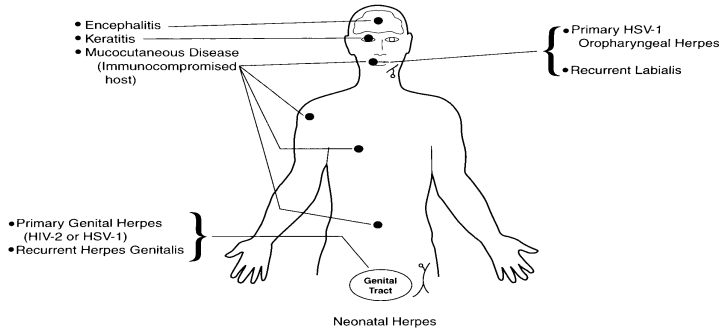


Primary Infection Recurrent Infection

Netter FH. ©2001 by Icon Learning Systems.

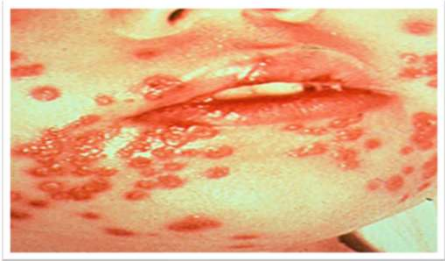
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Clinical Manifestations of Herpes Simplex Virus Infections



5

Primary Herpes Simplex Virus Infection: Cutaneous Lesions



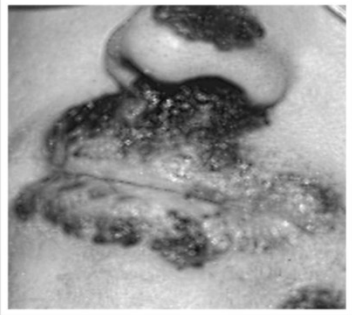
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Herpes Simplex Labialis



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Immunocompromised Host

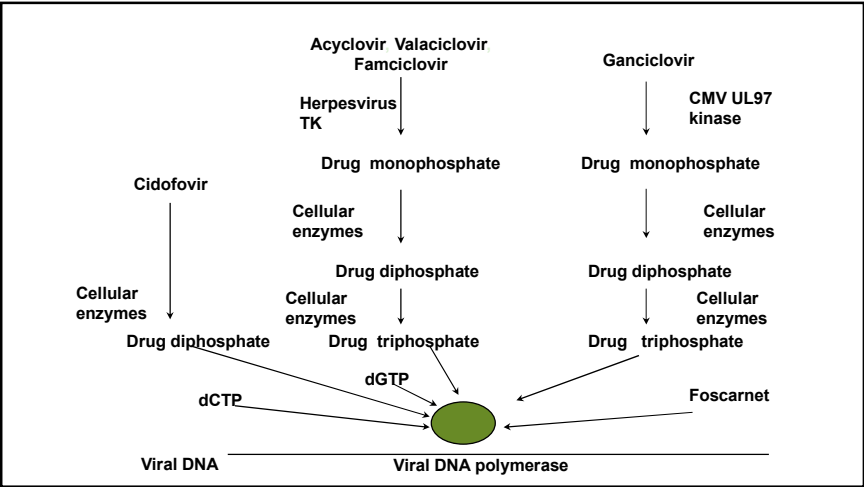


8

Most Widely Used Systemic Anti-HSV and VZV Drugs

- Acyclovir (ACV, Zovirax)
- Famciclovir (FCV, Famvir)
- Valacyclovir (VACV, Valtrex)
- Foscarnet (PFA, Foscavir)
- Ganciclovir (GCV, Cytovene)
- Val-Ganciclovir (Valcyte)
- Others:
 - Cidofovir

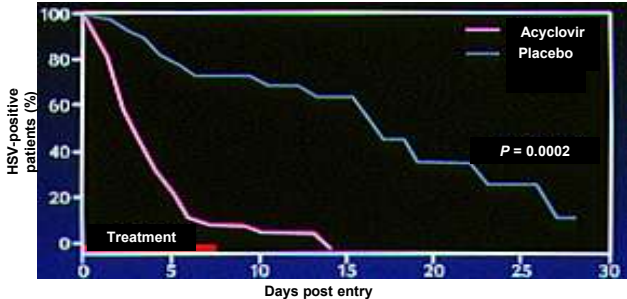
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10

Intravenous Acyclovir for Herpes Simplex Virus Infections in Immunocompromised Hosts

Time to cessation of viral shedding with acyclovir



11

Acyclovir Prophylaxis for HSV Infection in BMT Patients

Acyclovir (250 mg iv/m2 /tid) or placebo for 18 days beginning 3 days before transplant

Group	Number of Patients	Number of HSV Infections	P
Acyclovir	10	0	~0.003
Placebo	10	7	

12



13

Question #1

PREVIEW QUESTION



A 30-year-old heart transplant has received acyclovir for the past 60 days for cutaneous HSV infection. The lesions are now progressive despite high-dose intravenous therapy.
Instead of healing, as shown a previous slide, the lesions progress despite antiviral therapy.

A deficiency or alteration of which of the following is the most likely cause for disease progression?

- A. Ribonucleotide reductase
- B. Reverse transcriptase
- C. Protease
- D. Thymidine kinase
- E. DNA polymerase

14

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- B. Reverse transcriptase
- C. Protease
- D. **Thymidine kinase ***
- E. DNA polymerase

15

Question #2

Which is the best treatment choice for this patient?

- A. Give high-dose of intravenous acyclovir
- B. Give intravenous ganciclovir
- C. Give oral famciclovir
- D. Give oral ganciclovir
- E. Give intravenous foscarnet

16

Question #2

Which is the best treatment choice for this patient?

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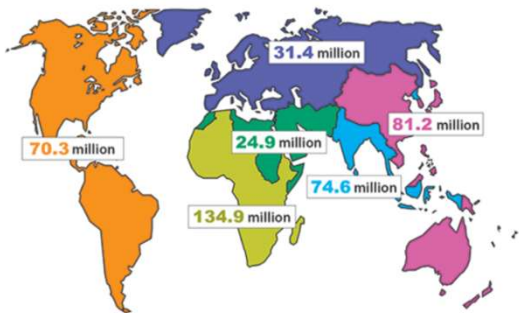
17

Questions 1 & 2

- Three types of acyclovir resistant viruses:
 - Thymidine kinase negative
 - Thymidine kinase altered substrate
 - DNA polymerase mutations
- All populations of HSV contain viruses with resistant genotypes
- Progressive disease has been limited to the immunocompromised host, especially HSCT recipients and those with poorly controlled HIV
- Three normal hosts with documented ACV resistant virus had disease progression

18

Global Prevalence of HSV-2 Infection



Total estimated number of people (in millions) infected with HSV-2 in 2012 by WHO region, gender and age range.
Source: WHO, as published in PLOS ONE (21 Jan 2015)

19

Acyclovir Therapy of Genital Herpes

Summary of clinical benefit for treatment of:

- Primary
- Recurrent
- Suppressive

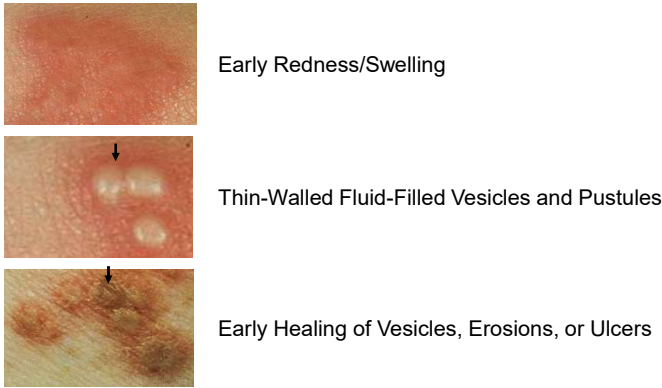
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Spectrum of HSV Clinical Presentation



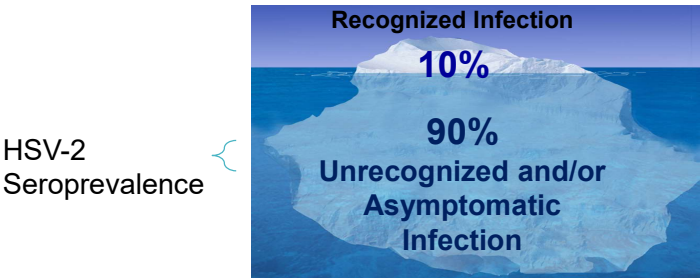
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Progression of Lesions



22

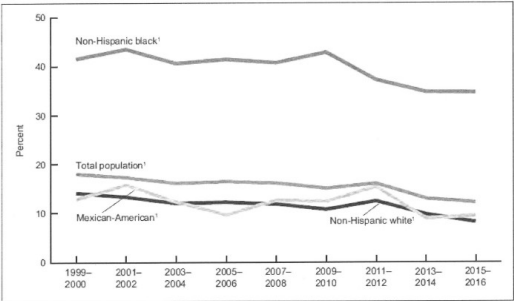
Clinical Spectrum of HSV-2



Mertz GJ. *Infect Dis Clin North Am.* 1993;7:825-839.

23

HSV-2 seroprevalence has decreased over time, overall and in all racial/ethnic groups



¹ Significant decreasing linear trend over time, p<0.05

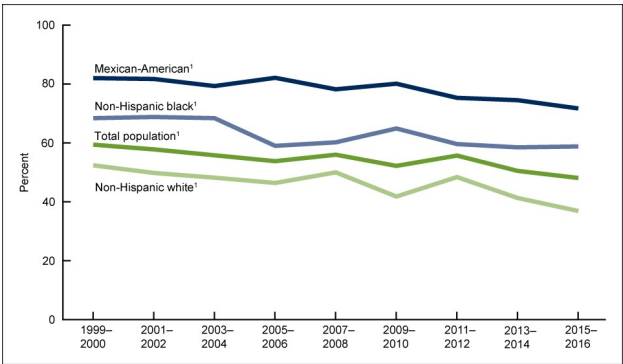
NOTES: Age adjusted by the direct method to the 2000 US Census population, using age groups 14-19, 20-29, 30-39, and 40-49 years. Total population includes all race and Hispanic origin groups including those not shown separately. Data for the Asian subpopulation are only available since 2013, so this subpopulation is not shown separately, but included in the total population.

McQuillan, et al. NCHS Data Brief 2018.

24

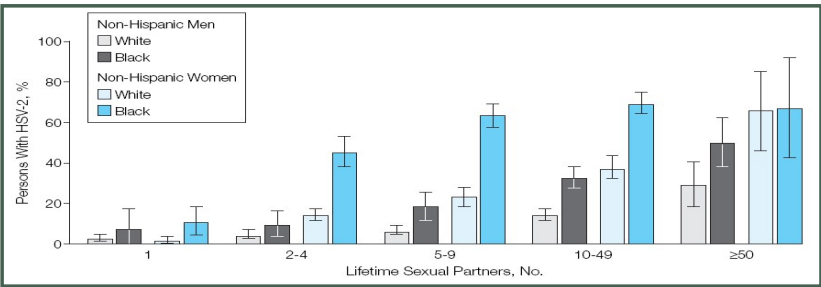
45 Herpes Simplex
Speaker: Richard Whitley, MD

Figure 2. Trends in age-adjusted prevalence of herpes simplex virus type 1 among persons aged 14–49, for the total population and by race and Hispanic origin: United States, 1999–2000 through 2015–2016



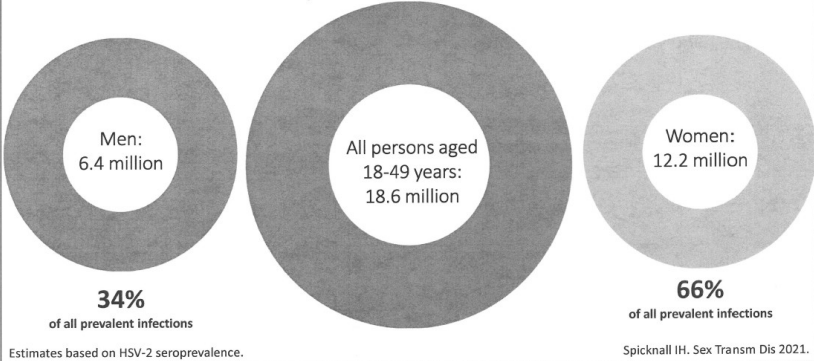
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SOURCE: NCHS, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1999–2016.

Age-Adjusted Herpes Simplex Virus Type 2 Seroprevalence
According to the Lifetime Number of Sex Partners by
Race/Ethnicity and Sex on NHANES in 1999-2004

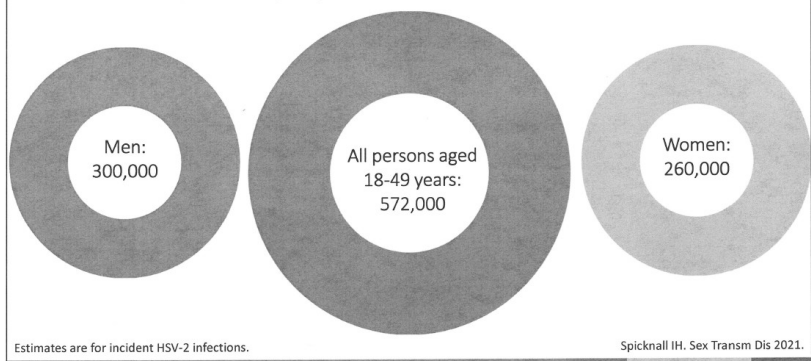


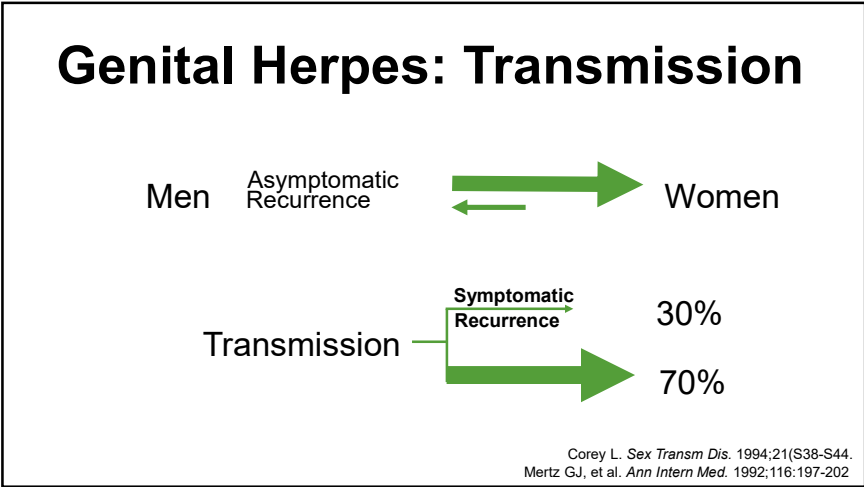
JAMA, August 23/30, 2006 Vol 296 No 8 pg 967

Men accounted for 34% of all prevalent genital herpes infections caused by HSV-2 in the United States in 2018

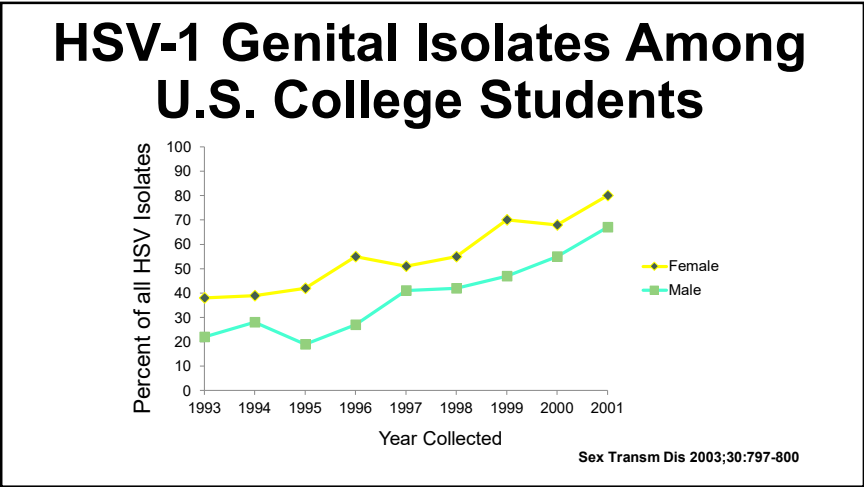


Number of incident genital herpes infections caused by HSV-2 nearly equal between men and women

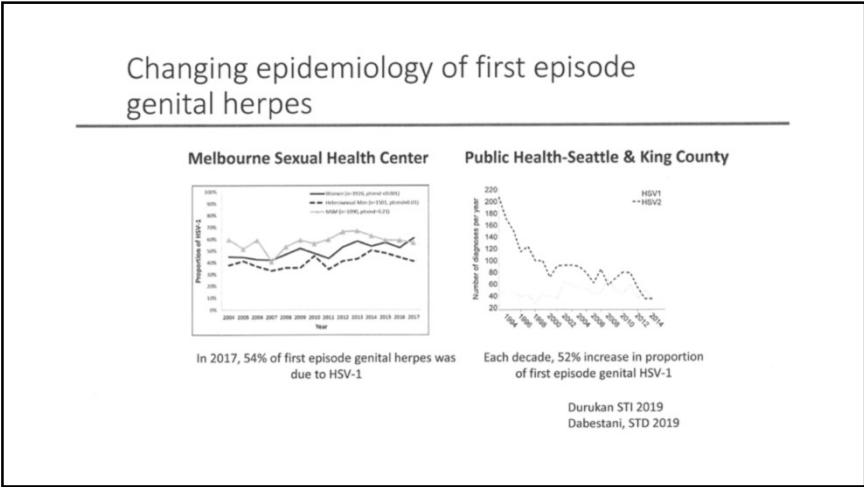




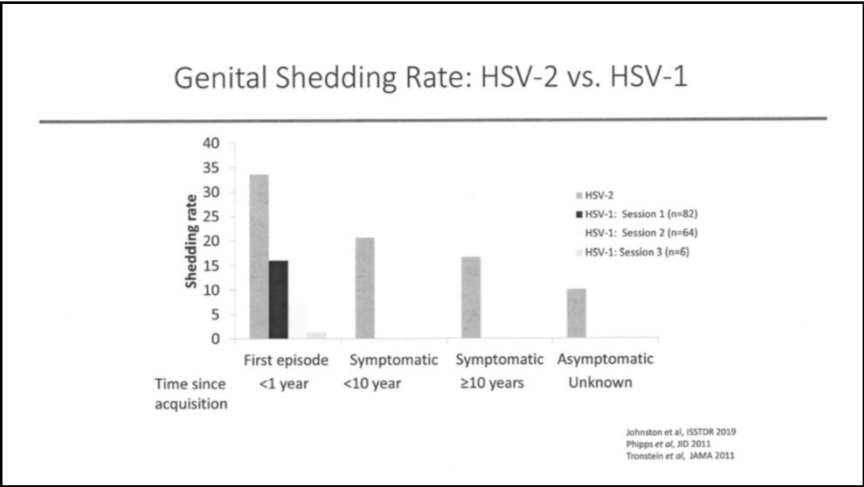
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30



31



32

Genital Herpes: Viral Shedding

- Duration is longer in primary than in recurrent episodes
- Higher rates in:
 - People with frequent outbreaks
 - First year after acquisition
 - Primary: 12 days
 - Recurrent: 2-3 days
- Oral antiviral suppressive therapy shortens the duration of, but does not eliminate, viral shedding

Genital Herpes – A Clinician's Guide to Diagnosis and Treatment. American Medical Association. 2001;1-20.
Whitley RJ, et al. *Clin Infect Dis.* 1998;26:541-555.

33

Herpes Presenting as Ulceration



- The patient had been to her doctor 3 times over the past 8 months with this pruritic and mildly painful rash on her right buttock. She had been told that it was an irritation from riding a bicycle.
- What is the key to the diagnosis?
 - A. The fact that lesions recurred
 - B. Site of involvement is not unusual
 - C. Trauma can induce reactivation

Photo courtesy of Jeffrey Gilbert, MD

34

Question #3

An 18-year-old man presents with a history of malaise, low-grade fevers, and new-onset painful genital lesions seen in the picture below. He had unprotected sexual intercourse with a female partner 2 weeks earlier. Neither he nor his partner has traveled outside the United States.



Which of the following diagnostic tests is most likely to yield the specific diagnosis?

- A. Serum RPR
- B. Serum FTA-Abs
- C. Darkfield microscopy
- D. Glycoprotein-G 1 serum antibodies
- E. PCR on lesion swab

35

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36

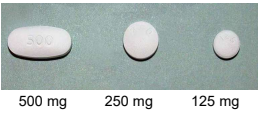
Question #3

- Historically, culture of HSV was the gold standard. Using daily cultures to detect viral shedding resulted in 4-7% of all days being positive.
- Use of PCR has replaced culture and detects shedding in up to ~25% of days. More recent data show intermittent shedding on the same day.
- A culture isolate of virus is required to test for resistance
- Serology can be used to assess prior exposure to HSV. The distinction between HSV glycoprotein 1 and 2 is best performed by Western Blot (U. Washington).

37

Oral Antiviral Therapies

• Famciclovir [Famvir®]



• Valaciclovir [Valtrex®]



• Acyclovir [Zovirax®]



Valtrex® and Zovirax® are registered trademarks of GlaxoSmithKline.

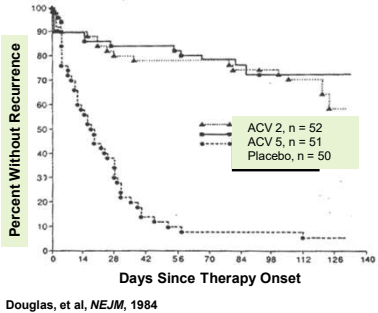
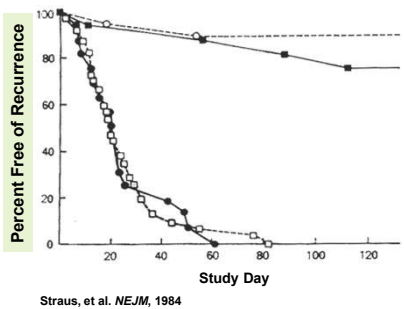
38

Impact of Acyclovir Therapy on Primary Genital HSV Infection

	Treatment Group (Days)		RR	P
	Acyclovir	Placebo		
Virus Shedding	2.8	16.8	6.82	0.0002
Pain	8.9	13.1	2.00	0.01
Scabbing	9.3	13.5	2.21	0.004
Healing	13.7	20.1	1.83	0.04

39

Effect of Acyclovir Prophylaxis on Recurrent Genital Herpes



40

Second Generation Anti-Herpetic Medications

- Valacyclovir (prodrug of acyclovir)
- Famciclovir (prodrug of penciclovir)

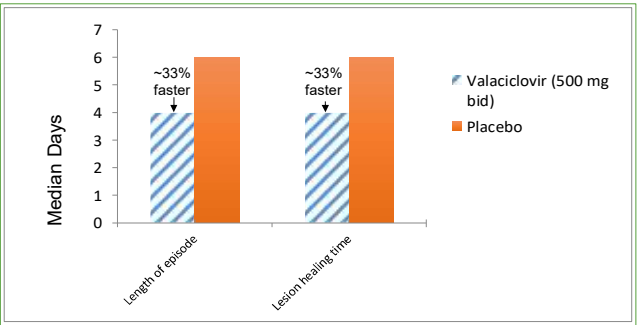
41

Acyclovir/Valacyclovir Kinetics

DRUG	DOSE	PHARMACOKINETICS	
		C _{max} (µg/mL)	Daily AUC (µg/mL•h)
VALTREX	1 g 3x/d	5.0	47
Oral ZOVIRAX	800 mg 5x/d	1.6	24
IV ZOVIRAX	5 mg/kg 3x/d	9.8	54
	10 mg/kg 3x/d	20.7	107

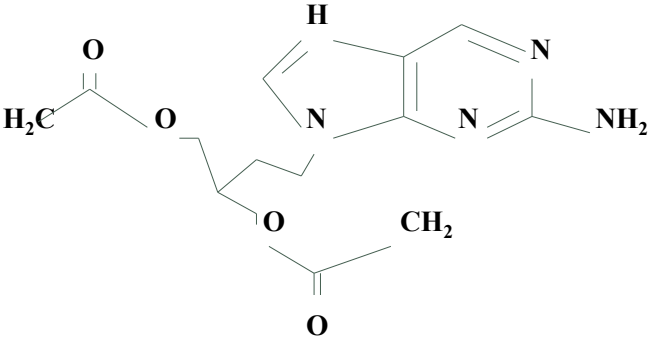
42

Therapy of Recurrent Genital Herpes: Duration of Disease

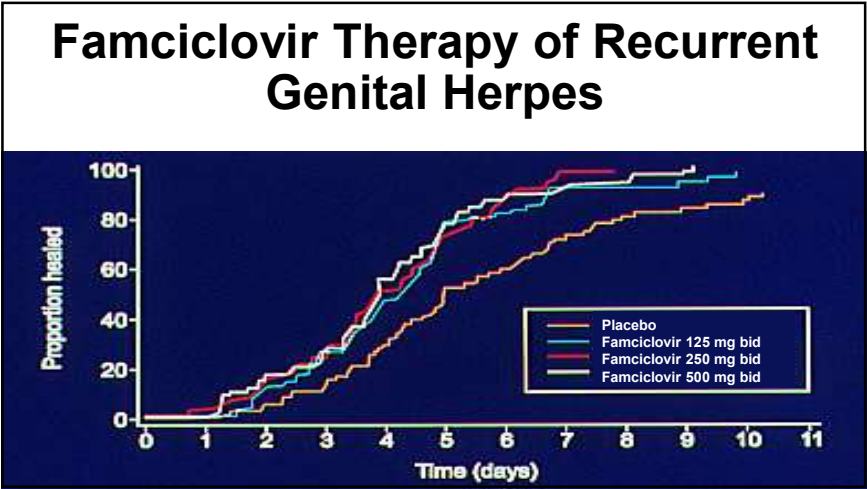


43

Famciclovir



44



45

Shorter and Shorter Therapy

- Genital Herpes
 - Valacyclovir: three days
 - Famciclovir: one day
- Labial Herpes
 - Valacyclovir: two days
 - Famciclovir: one day

46

Prevention of Person-to-Person Transmission

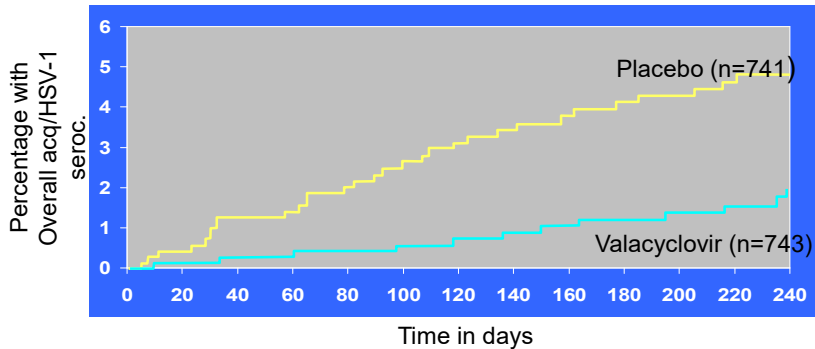
47

Valacyclovir Prevention of HSV Transmission to Susceptible Partners

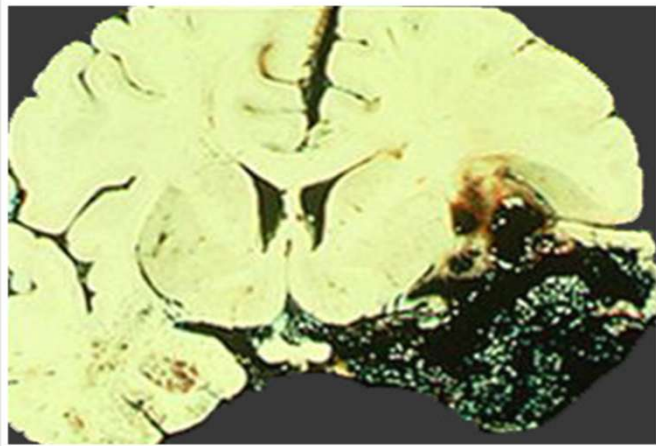
Susceptible Partner	Val-ACV N = 743	Placebo N = 741	Total
No. acquired HSV-2	14	28	42
No. acquired HSV-1	0	4	4
No. developed clinical HSV-2	4	17	21

48

Time to Acquisition of HSV-1 or HSV-2 in Susceptible Partners

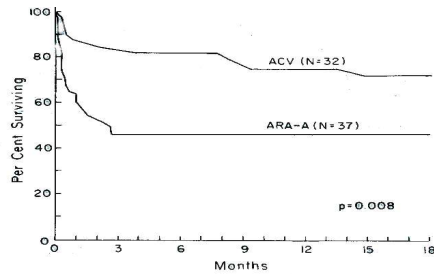


49



50

Herpes Simplex Encephalitis Survival



Vidarabine (ARA-A)
vs
Acyclovir (ACV);
P=0.008

51

HSE Morbidity

Percent Patients
Patient Normal / Mild Impairment

Age	Glasgow Coma Scale	
	<6	>6
<30	0	60
>30	0	36

52

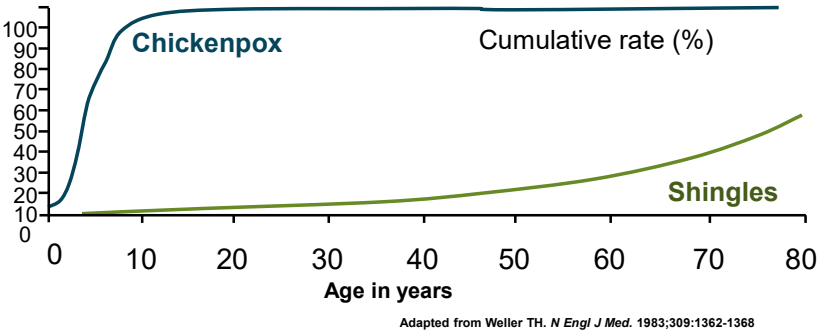
Sensitivity and Specificity of PCR

	Biopsy Positive	Biopsy Negative
PCR Positive	53	3
PCR Negative	1	44

Sensitivity 98%
Specificity 94%
Positive Predictive Value 95%
Negative Predictive Value 98%

53

Varicella Zoster Virus Infection



54

CHICKEN POX:
Is Therapy of Value?

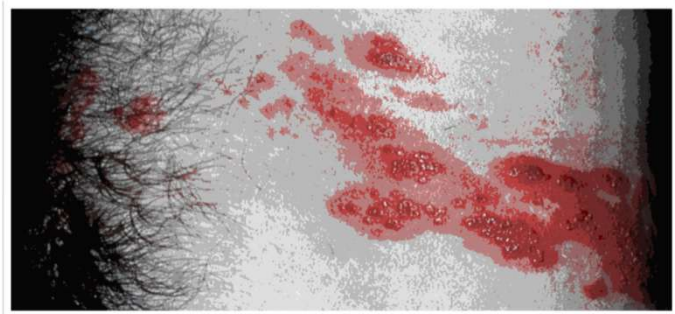
55

Treatment of Chicken Pox:
Adults (>18 Years) < 24 Hour Duration

	Acyclovir (n=38)	Placebo (n= 38)	P
Time to maximum number of skin lesions (days)	1.5	2.1	0.002
Days of new lesion information	2.7	3.3	0.03
Time to onset of cutaneous healing (days)	2.6	3.3	<0.001
Time to 100% crusting (days)	5.6	7.4	0.001
Maximum number of lesions	268	500	0.04

56

Thoracic Herpes Zoster



57

Questions

1. What is the most likely diagnosis?
2. How would you prove the etiology?



58

Answer

- Clinically this is herpes zoster
- The lesion shown is Tzank prep positive on skin scraping. The sensitivity of this test is only ~60% and, therefore, is not recommended
- Immunofluorescence is positive for VZV, having a sensitivity of ~80%
- Preferably, PCR can be performed even when lesions are scabbed and has the highest sensitivity

59

Question #4

What complication would you be most concerned about?

- A. Facial paralysis
- B. Keratitis
- C. Encephalitis
- D. Optic neuritis
- E. Oculomotor palsies



<http://www.itfnoroloji.org/kranyalnoropatiler/Kranyalnoropatiler.html>

60

Question #4

What complication would you be most concerned about?

- A. Facial paralysis *
- B. Keratitis
- C. Encephalitis
- D. Optic neuritis
- E. Oculomotor palsies



<http://www.itfnoroloji.org/kranyalnoropatiler/Kranyalnoropatiler.html>

61

Question #4

- This patient has Ramsay Hunt syndrome (Herpes zoster oticus), caused by VZV reactivation in the geniculate ganglion, i.e. zoster of CN VII, presenting with severe ear pain and reduced hearing or deafness. When vesicle are seen in the auditory canal, abnormalities in cranial nerves VII, and sometimes VIII, IX or X, can occur. Thus A, facial paralysis is the best answer. Acyclovir is usually recommended although its not clear if it's effective. The facial paralysis is more severe and less likely to resolve than the usual HSV related Bells Palsy.
- Keratitis would be more typical of a lesion on the tip of the nose, or zoster ophthalmicus involving the CN V ophthalmic branch.
- Encephalitis can be caused rarely by VZV and would not be the best answer. Stroke syndromes due to carotid intimal involvement are associated with zoster, and often with cranial nerve V (trigeminal involvement), but are not offered as an answer
- Optic neuritis and oculomotor paralysis would be uncommon.

62

Question #5

The patient has only the observed finding on his nose.

- What is your most likely diagnosis?
- What is the name of this sign?



www.medscape.com

63

Question #5

What complication is most likely to be associated with this illness?

- A. Deafness
- B. Vertigo
- C. Optic neuritis
- D. Keratitis
- E. Stroke

www.medscape.com

64

Question #5

What complication is most likely to be associated with this illness?

- A. Deafness
- B. Vertigo
- C. Optic neuritis
- D. Keratitis *
- E. Stroke

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65

Question #5

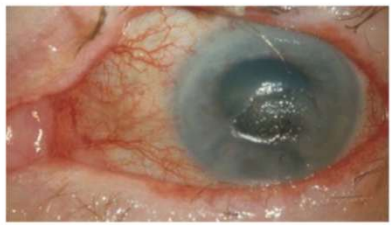
This patient has Hutchison’s sign, which indicates involvement of the cranial nerve V, i.e., ophthalmic branch of the trigeminal nerve, which innervates the tip of the nose and the globe. After a prodrome of fever and headache for 1-4 days, patients develop a cutaneous rash. Days or up to 3 weeks later, the sclera and cornea can be involved. Thus, keratitis is the correct answer.

Deafness or vertigo would be more characteristic of geniculate ganglion (CN VII) involvement, i.e., Ramsay Hunt, which is a polyneuropathy involving the cranial nerve VII, and then often involves VIII, IX, X. Thus, A and B are not the best answers.

66

Hutchison’s Sign

Zoster Involving nasociliary branch, Cranial Nerve VII which innervates the tip of the nose and the cornea



67

Zoster Ophthalmicus



68

Natural History of Zoster in the Normal Host

- Acute neuritis may precede rash by 48 - 72 hours
- Maculopapular eruption, followed by clusters of vesicles
- Unilateral dermatomal distribution

69

Natural History of Zoster in the Normal Host

- Events of healing:
 - Cessation of new vesicle formation: 3 - 5 days
 - Total pustulation: 4 - 6 days
 - Total scabbing: 7 - 10 days
 - Complete healing 2 - 4 weeks
- Cutaneous dissemination can occur
dissemination is extremely rare
- Postherpetic neuralgia in 10% - 40% of cases

70

Complications of Zoster

Common

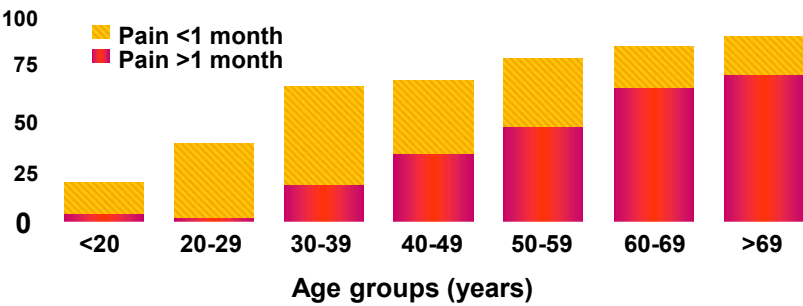
- Postherpetic neuralgia
- Ocular complications
- Ophthalmic zoster
- (Uveitis, keratitis, scleritis, optic neuritis)
- Pneumonitis
- Scarring
- Bacterial superinfection

Uncommon

- Cutaneous dissemination
- Herpes gangrenosum
- Hepatitis
- Encephalitis
- Motor neuropathies
- Myelitis
- Hemiparesis (granulomatous CNS vasculitis)

71

Prevalence and Duration of Pain



de Moragas et al. Arch Derm. 1957;75:193-196.

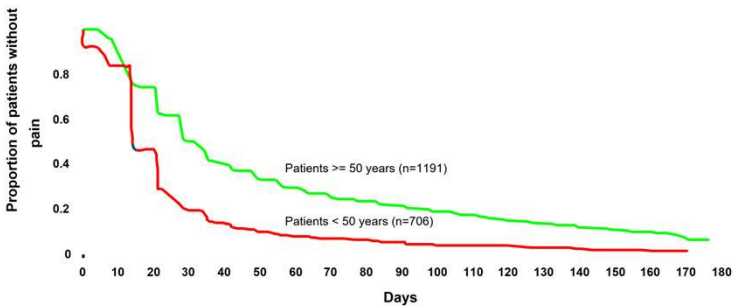
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Goals of Therapy

- Accelerate cutaneous healing
- Accelerate loss of pain acute / chronic
- Prevent complications

73

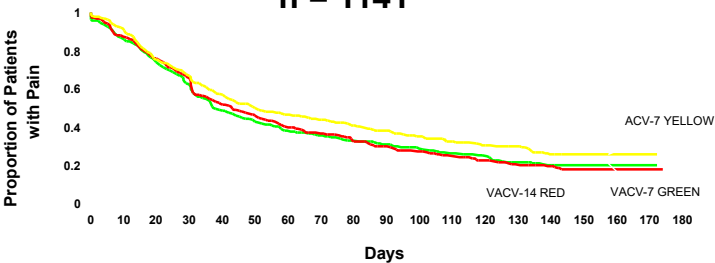
Time to Cessation of Zoster-Associated Pain



74

Time to Cessation of Zoster-Associated Pain

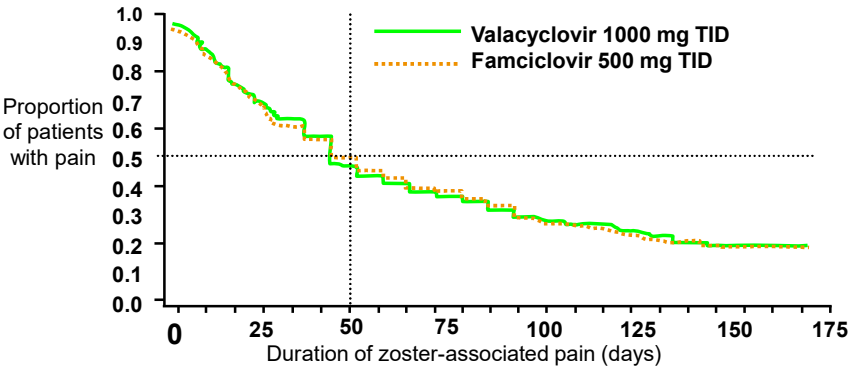
n = 1141



* Beutner, et al. Acyclovir versus Valacyclovir in the treatment of herpes zoster in patients > 50 years old.

75

Resolution of Pain in Herpes Zoster With Valacyclovir and Famciclovir



76

Summary of Efficacy of Concomitant Steroid Therapy with Acyclovir

- Accelerates resolution of acute neuritis
- Accelerates:
 - Return to usual activity P<0.001
 - Unaroused sleep P<0.0001
 - Cessation of analgesic use P<0.001
- Effect on chronic pain P=0.06

77

Question #6

What is the most likely etiologic agent?

- A. HSV
- B. VZV
- C. CMV
- D. EBV
- E. HHV6



www.cdc.gov

78

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- B. VZV
- C. CMV
- D. EBV
- E. HHV6



www.cdc.gov

79

Question #6

- This patient has facial palsy, also known as Bells palsy. The most likely cause of this lesion is HSV. HIV and Lyme disease are less common causes. Answers d and e are not the best answer. Of note, Lyme is rarely the cause of Bells palsy unless there are other manifestations of Lyme disease.
- For typical facial palsy, prednisone is the preferred therapy, optimally given within 3 days of onset, for one week (prednisone 60-80mg qd). Acyclovir alone is not better than placebo, although there might be some rational (unproven) to add acyclovir to prednisone.
- Ganciclovir would be a therapy for CMV, a rare cause of facial paralysis and thus not the best answer.

80

**Methods of Preventing /
Modifying Varicella**

- Pre-exposure: Oka varicella vaccine
- Post-exposure: VZIG (now available in US)
- Oka varicella vaccine
 (<3 days after exposure)
- Acyclovir
 (7-14 days after exposure)

81

**Second Generation Vaccine:
Shingrix**

- **Recombinant adjuvanted vaccine**
 - Two shots
 - > 50 years of age
- **Efficacy**
 - Both PHN and incidence of shingles
 - >90% for >4 years
- **Adverse events**
 - Local reactogenicity: redness and pain ~ 50-70%
 - Systemic malaise/fever: ~30%

83

Thank You
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84