

Patient delivered partner therapy (PDPT)

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Patient-delivered partner therapy is the practice of providing a prescription or medication to a patient diagnosed with an STI to give to their sexual partner(s) without that partner being directly consulted by the health care provider. PDPT with a single 1 gram dose of azithromycin for chlamydia has been shown to be effective in treating partners who may not have otherwise accessed treatment, thereby preventing re-infections and treating more partners per index patient than patient-initiated notification[1-4]. PDPT may also reduce complications and further transmission of infection in the community. Further, there have been no major adverse drug reactions reported from azithromycin associated with PDPT[1,4,5]. Evaluations of PDPT in Australian sexual health and family planning clinics have found PDPT for chlamydia to be highly acceptable to patients and partners. Of index patients offered PDPT, 79% accepted the offer in one study[6] and in another, 92% of partner(s) took the antibiotics on the same day as the index case[7].

Sexual partners should be encouraged to get tested. In general, patient-delivered partner therapy (PDPT) is best suited to situations when other means of contact tracing have failed or are considered likely to fail. For example, PDPT would be appropriate for situations where partner(s) are unable or unwilling to attend a health service in a timely manner or for patients with repeat infections whose partner(s) have not been treated. PDPT should generally not be used for patients diagnosed with more than one STI, patients whose partners are pregnant, patients at risk of partner violence, or partner(s) at high risk of HIV infection such as gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men.

In Australia, PDPT guidance allowing the prescription or supply of azithromycin for partners of patients diagnosed with uncomplicated genital chlamydia trachomatis infection is available in Victoria[8], New South Wales[9] and the Northern Territory[10]. GPs and other primary care providers in other States and Territories should contact their local health department for PDPT advice.

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