

# The Importance of Vaccinating IBD Patients During the COVID-19 Pandemic



Immunization is an important issue in patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), as these patients have been shown to have an increased risk for acquiring viral and bacterial infections. In a review article in this month's issue of *Gastroenterology & Hepatology*, Dr Sheena Crosby, Dr Michael J. Schuh, Dr Freddy Caldera, and Dr Francis A. Farraye examine the immunization of patients with IBD and explain why this issue is more critical than ever during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The authors provide a comprehensive review of vaccines, including the influenza; pneumococcal pneumonia; herpes zoster; hepatitis A; hepatitis B; human papillomavirus; varicella; and measles, mumps, and rubella vaccines. The authors also examine topics such as provider and patient barriers to vaccination, how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected vaccine administration, and the efficacy of vaccines in patients who have IBD.

Portal hypertension is the focus of our *Advances in Hepatology* column. Dr Guadalupe Garcia-Tsao reviews this condition, including its causes, typical presentations, and the current use of nonselective beta blockers and portosystemic shunting procedures such as the transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt procedure. She also discusses the definitions of clinically significant portal hypertension and mild portal hypertension, as well as the possible role of statins, among other issues.

Our *Advances in GERD* column centers on eosinophilic esophagitis and diet (in particular, the elemental diet, allergy testing-directed diet, and empiric elimination diet). Along with related issues, Dr Nirmala P. Gonsalves discusses treatment goals for this condition, the advantages and disadvantages of using different dietary therapies, the difficulties of changing the dietary habits of patients, how to choose which diet to follow, and studies on the long-term adherence of diet-based therapies.

Finally, our *Advances in IBD* column provides an update on the status of fecal microbiota transplantation in patients who have IBD. Among other issues, Dr Jessica R. Allegretti discusses the role that the gut microbiome appears to play in IBD, why fecal microbiota transplantation is being studied in patients who have IBD, and recent data on the use of this treatment approach in ulcerative colitis patients as well as in Crohn's disease patients.

May this issue provide you with helpful information that you can put to good use in your clinical practice.

Sincerely,

Gary R. Lichtenstein, MD, AGAF, FACP, FACG