Bordetella Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

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Cases of Bordetella Pertussis (the cause of whooping cough), rose significantly between 2009 and 2012 across the United States. According to the New York State Department of Health and the CDC, New York State has the dubious honor of having the third highest number of cases nationally.

From 2011 when 900 cases were documented, the number of cases in New York State ballooned to 2,649 in 2012. Due to an aggressive campaign launched by the Department of Health to immunize the public, the number of cases has decreased for 2013.

What is the cause of this seemingly quiet storm?

Waning immunity is one of the suspects. Some experts believe that the protection from the pertussis vaccine we received as children lasts only 5 to 10 years on average. So as adults, we need to get vaccinated with Tdap.

The sad problem is that our children are the ones in danger. Nationwide, last year 110 babies under 1 year of age were affected. Unlike other years, no deaths were reported so far in 2013. However, in 2012, 15 infant deaths were reported. The majority of these were in children less than 3 months of age. These deaths were preventable.

Since children lack immunity until their first Tdap shot at the age of 3 months, it is important for the adults caring for and surrounding them to be immunized to protect themselves and the baby from becoming ill. This is called "cocooning.” This same concept applies to the influenza vaccine. Babies cannot be immunized with the influenza vaccine until the age of 6 months.

Breast Cancer Walk
Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

Over 100 members of the Downstate community participated in the American Cancer Society’s “Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Sunday,” held October 20th in Prospect Park. Collectively, Downstate teams raised $14,627 and still counting – contributions are still being accepted until the end of the year.

“It was a great day for a great cause,” said Betty Jung, RN patient educator in the Center for Health Promotion and Wellness, who coordinated UBH’s efforts for the 4.6-mile walk. “Downstate came out in force, to show support for research and for patients and their families who have been affected by this disease.”

Monica B. Coronado, RN, BSN, CNOR, deputy director of perioperative services, and her team from Perioperative Services were among the top fundraisers for the event, with $5,591 raised. Students from Downstate’s Colleges of Medicine and Nursing also supported the event.

Downstate’s participation was featured on Brooklyn News 12 and the Ditmas Park Patch online community newspaper.
The staff of Orthopaedic Surgery and Rehabilitation Medicine has been honing its skills in use of the Functional Independence Measure (FIM), in preparation for recertification of the unit in December. The unit has been holding twice weekly training sessions in which staff test each other's skills.

“FIM is a scoring document that is used to collect data on each and every patient admitted to the rehab unit,” explains Debra Dickstein, OTR/L, administrative director, Rehabilitation Unit. “It measures the level of a patient’s disability, and helps us determine the burden of care for each patient to assist us in determining how much aid a patient may need to carry out activities of daily living and functional activities.”

Patients are scored on 18 motor and cognitive tasks at both admission and discharge. The scores, graded 1 to 7, help determine projected length of stay as well as reimbursement levels by Medicare and other insurance payors. FIM scores also guide staff in setting rehabilitation goals for patients and in creating treatment plans to meet those goals.

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In 2012, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a law which “require(s) all general hospitals with newborn nurseries or obstetric services to offer and provide vaccination against Bordetella Pertussis (whooping cough) to parents and anticipated caregivers of all newborns being treated in the hospital following their births.” Physician endorsement and high staff vaccination rates are two of the strategies that will lead to success.

Our obligation to successfully treat our patients is paramount. Do not forget that in this era of pay-for-performance that our reimbursement will depend not only upon patient satisfaction scores, but also the ability to implement evidence-based guidelines into our practices.

By our actions in this regard, let us make apparent to our community that SUNY Downstate continues to serve our patients.

Here at SUNY Downstate, a multidisciplinary team including Infection Control, Performance Improvement, Regulatory Affairs, Pharmacy, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Nursing, Employee Health, Registration, Billing and Pediatrics has been meeting to discuss effective ways to accomplish our goals. To date, lectures have been given to nurses on Labor & Delivery, the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Housekeeping, and the Hospital Police Force. A presentation was made to the Provision of Care Committee and to the Executive Performance Improvement Committee.

Cards with bullets about Tdap on one side, and the influenza vaccine on the other, are handed to the patients in the Suite G Ambulatory Unit to promote discussions between the patients and medical providers. Another successful intervention utilized at other hospitals, and one under consideration here, is having pre-printed orders in the postpartum area.

The group is in the process of developing policies and procedures to address this issue. A follow-up presentation to the Provision of Care Committee on needed policy revisions should take place in the upcoming weeks. Hopefully the dedication from this group, and the emergence of more champions, will make this a satisfying and productive collaboration.
Breast Cancer Walk

7 teams from Downstate participated:

- Downstate for Double D’s Perioperative Team
- Center for Health Promotion and Wellness
- Adam’s Striders
- The Tender Hearts at Downstate
- Team Fenimore
- SUNY Downstate Ob/Gyn Society

Team Leader:
- Gabrielle Fridman
- Monica Coronado
- Betty Jung
- Selina Adams
- Denise A. Reid
- Marlene Ferguson
- Kolbe Hancock

Downstate’s Breast Cancer Tribute Quilt. Squares were donated by the hospital and campus community, as well as by the community at large, and sewn together by Lucy Grassi, budget director for the School of Public Health.

Allison Attong-Rogers is a 2012 Downstate retiree, but she still continues to support Downstate’s team.

College of Nursing students Kristine Mnatsakryan, RN, and Michaela Adi, RN.

Monica Coronado, RN, BSN, CNOR, deputy director of nursing, Perioperative Services, is pictured (center) with her dogs, German Shepherd Gretel, walking for her 4th year, and Tea Cup Terrier Boo, who has participated in the walk for 13 years. Surrounding Ms. Coronado, l to r, are Olive Nelson, Rehab; Natalie Baker, OPD; Mary Jane Torres, RN, CCU and her mother, Zosima Torres; and Cory Florece, RN, IV team.

Denise Rolston, MA, RN, CCRN, from Cardiothoracic Surgery, walked with her cousin’s son.
Downstate Honored by the Association of Black Cardiologists

Downstate has been honored by the Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) with its Diversity in Cardiology Award, presented during the organization’s annual awards dinner, “Saving Hearts for Generations,” held in September.

Jeffrey Borer, MD, chief of cardiovascular medicine, accepted the award on behalf of the division and Downstate. The award recognized Downstate for extraordinary community impact and for its institution-wide efforts to increase diversity in the field of cardiology. Ruth Browne, ScD, MPH, chief executive officer of the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health, and Josheila Crandall, administrator, Department of Medicine, also attended.

Additional honorees at the event included Dr. Richard Allen, a 1962 COM graduate of Downstate, who founded ABC in 1974.