

Aciclovir effective in prevention and treatment of herpes simplex virus in patients being treated for cancer

Clinical question	How effective are interventions for the prevention and/or treatment of herpes simplex virus (HSV) in patients receiving treatment for cancer?
Bottom line	Aciclovir is efficacious in the prevention and treatment of HSV infections, in terms of preventing clinical/culture positive HSV infections, reduction in healing time, duration of viral shedding and relief of pain. There is no evidence valaciclovir is more efficacious than aciclovir, or a high dose of valaciclovir is better than a low dose of valaciclovir. There is evidence, for prevention, placebo is more efficacious than prostaglandin E.
Caveat	No trials reported on duration of hospital stay, amount of analgesia or patient quality of life. In all included trials, risk of bias is unclear.
Context	Treatment of cancer is increasingly effective, but associated with oral complications, such as mucositis, fungal infections, bacterial infections and viral infections, such as HSV. Oral complications can impact severely on quality of life and may lead to life-threatening systemic infection.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Glenny A-M et al. Interventions for the prevention and treatment of herpes simplex virus in patients being treated for cancer. Cochrane Reviews 2009, Issue 1. Article No. CD006706. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD006706.pub2. This review contains 17 trials involving 1011 participants.
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[References]

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