Civil Surgeon TB Screening Survey

Background

In 2012, The California Department of Public Health sent a 31-question survey to the nearly 1,000 civil surgeons (CS) currently practicing in California. The objectives were to better understand the characteristics and testing practices of CS, to determine whether tuberculosis testing differs by type of practice, and familiarity with the CS technical instructions (TIs), and to identify strengths and areas where further education and training are needed. Sixty-seven percent of civil surgeons responded to the survey.

Key Findings

- Confusion about the definition of a positive TST for purposes of the SA evaluation
  - Only 62% of CS selected an induration of ≥5mm for all applicants, the answer consistent with TIs
- Many CS would not refer applicants that are immunosuppressed or with symptoms suggestive of TB for a CXR, as required by the TIs
  - Referral of immunosuppressed applicants: 33%
  - Referral of applicants with symptoms: 61%
- Only 90% of CS would report or refer a suspected active TB case to the local health department
- Most CS refer to other providers after diagnosing TB or LTBI in a status adjustor
- CS contact information provided as made available by the US Citizenship and Immigration Service is not up to date

Recommendations

- CS outreach/education
  - Trainings
    - Expand training for new CS
    - Develop/provide additional/periodic trainings for current CS
    - Larger DGMQ role in trainings
  - Communicate changes to the TIs to CS
  - Clarify preferred referral patterns and reporting responsibilities
- TI user tools for CS
  - Abbreviated pocket guide
  - Smart phone application
  - Access to expert consultation by phone
- Enhanced communication between CS and local HDs
  - Ensure that status adjusters follow-up on referrals to local HDs
  - Ensure that CS report applicants TST/IGRA results to their primary providers
- Development of surveillance system for CS
- DGMQ assume bigger role with CS, similar to role with panel physicians
- Improved maintenance of CS contact information, including email addresses