European Guideline for the Management of Pelvic Inflammatory Disease

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This guideline refers to ascending infections in the female genital tract unrelated to delivery and surgery and does not include actinomyces related infection.

**Aetiology and Transmission**

- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is usually the result of infection ascending from the endocervix causing endometritis, salpingitis, parametritis, oophoritis, tuboovarian abcess and/or pelvic peritonitis.
- *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and *Chlamydia trachomatis* have been identified as causative agents whilst *Mycoplasma genitalium* may also be implicated. Micro-organisms from the vaginal flora including anaerobes, streptococci, staphylococci, *E. coli* and *H. influenzae* are also associated with upper genital tract inflammation.
- The relative importance of different pathogens varies in different countries and regions within Europe.

A number of factors are associated with PID:

- Factors related to sexual behaviour
  - young age
  - multiple partners
  - recent new partner (within previous 3 months)
  - past history of STD (in the patient or their partner)
- Instrumentation of the uterus / interruption of the cervical barrier
  - termination of pregnancy
  - insertion of intrauterine device within the past 6 weeks
  - hysterosalpingography
Clinical Features

Symptoms

PID may be symptomatic or asymptomatic. Even when present, clinical symptoms and signs lack sensitivity and specificity (the positive predictive value of a clinical diagnosis is 65-90% compared to laparoscopic diagnosis).1-3

The following symptoms are suggestive of a diagnosis of PID:1-3,4:

- lower abdominal pain – usually bilateral
- dyspareunia – particularly of recent onset
- abnormal bleeding – intermenstrual and post coital bleeding can occur secondary to associated cervicitis and endometritis
- abnormal vaginal or cervical discharge – as a result of associated cervicitis, endometritis or bacterial vaginosis

Physical signs

These signs are associated with PID:

- lower abdominal tenderness
- adnexal tenderness on bimanual vaginal examination
- cervical motion tenderness on bimanual vaginal examination
- fever (>38°C)
PID should be considered in a patient with the clinical signs and/or symptoms outlined above or in an asymptomatic individual from a high risk group.

**Differential Diagnosis**

The differential diagnosis of lower abdominal pain in a young woman includes:

- ectopic pregnancy
- acute appendicitis
- endometriosis
- irritable bowel syndrome
- complications of an ovarian cyst i.e. rupture, torsion
- functional pain (pain of unknown physical origin)

**Complications**

- The Fitz-Hugh-Curtis syndrome comprises right upper quadrant pain associated with perihepatitis which occurs in up to 10-20% of women with PID and may be the dominant symptom. Although laparoscopic division of hepatic adhesions has been performed, there is insufficient clinical trial evidence to make specific recommendations for treatment beyond those for PID
- In pregnancy PID is uncommon but has been associated with an increase in both maternal and fetal morbidity, therefore parenteral therapy is advised although none of the suggested evidence based regimens are of proven safety in this situation. There is insufficient data from clinical trials to recommend a specific regimen for pregnant women with PID and empirical therapy with agents effective against gonorrhoea, chlamydia and anaerobic infections should be
considered taking into account local antibiotic sensitivity patterns (e.g. i.v. cefoxitin 2g three times daily plus i.v. erythromycin 50mg/kg continuous infusion, with the possible addition of i.v. metronidazole 500mg three times daily)

(Evidence level III, B)

- Women with HIV may have more severe symptoms associated with PID but respond well to antibiotic therapy, although parenteral regimens may be required\(^5\text{--}^8\).
- There is no evidence of the superiority of any one of the suggested regimens over the others. Therefore patients known to be allergic to one of the suggested regimens should be treated with an alternative.
- In women with an intrauterine contraceptive device (IUD) in situ, consider removing the IUD since this may be associated with better short term improvement in symptoms and signs\(^9\).

(Evidence level Ib, A)

**Diagnosis**

- Testing for gonorrhoea and chlamydia in the lower genital tract is recommended since a positive result supports the diagnosis of PID. The absence of infection from the endocervix or urethra does not exclude PID\(^1\text{--}^3\).
- The absence of endocervical or vaginal pus cells has a good negative predictive value (95%) for a diagnosis of PID but their presence is non-specific (poor positive predictive value – 17\%)\(^10\).
- An elevated ESR or C reactive protein supports the diagnosis\(^11\) but is often normal in mild/moderate PID
- Elevation of the white cell count (WBC) supports the diagnosis but can be normal in mild cases.
• Laparoscopy may strongly support a diagnosis of PID but is not justified routinely on the basis of cost and the potential difficulty in identifying mild intra-tubal inflammation or endometritis\textsuperscript{1-3}

• Endometrial biopsy and ultrasound scanning may also be helpful when there is diagnostic difficulty but there is insufficient evidence to support their routine use at present

• A pregnancy test should be performed to help exclude an ectopic pregnancy

Management

Information, explanation and advice for the patient

• Patients should be advised to avoid unprotected intercourse until they, and their partner(s), have completed treatment and follow-up (Evidence level IV, C)

• A detailed explanation of their condition with particular emphasis on the long-term implications for the health of themselves and their partner(s) should be provided, reinforced with clear and accurate written information. Appropriate information should include:
  - fertility is usually well preserved in women with first episode PID who receive prompt appropriate anti-microbial therapy
  - the risk of impaired fertility approximately doubles with each subsequent episode of PID
  - the risk of impaired fertility is increased in clinically more severe PID
  - chronic pelvic pain of varying severity affects around 30\% of women following PID
  - PID increases the relative risk of a subsequent pregnancy being an ectopic, but the absolute risk of ectopic pregnancy remains low at around 1\%

The UK Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology has produced a patient information leaflet which is available at \url{http://www.rcog.org.uk/resources/Public/pdf/Acute_PID_2004.pdf}.

(Evidence level IV, C)
Therapy

Broad spectrum antibiotic therapy is required to cover *N. gonorrhoeae, C. trachomatis* and anaerobic infection \(^1\)\(^2\). It is also desirable to include microbiological cover for other possible pathogens (e.g. *Mycoplasma genitalium*, anaerobes, streptococci, staphylococci, *E. coli, H. influenzae*). There are comparatively fewer data on oral than parenteral regimens.

The choice of an appropriate treatment regimen may be influenced by:

- robust evidence on local antimicrobial sensitivity patterns
- robust evidence on the local epidemiology of specific infections in this setting
- cost
- patient preference and compliance
- severity of disease

General measures include:

- Rest is advised for those with severe disease (Evidence level C)
- If there is a possibility that the patient could be pregnant, a pregnancy test should be performed (Evidence level C)
- Appropriate analgesia should be provided (Evidence level C)
- Intravenous therapy is recommended for patients with more severe clinical disease (Evidence level IV, C)

Admission for parenteral therapy, observation, further investigation and/or possible surgical intervention should be considered in the following situations \(^2\) (Evidence level IV, C):
• diagnostic uncertainty
• clinical failure with oral therapy
• severe symptoms or signs
• presence of a tuboovarian abcess
• inability to tolerate an oral regimen
• pregnancy

In inpatients the treatment response can be monitored by changes in C reactive protein and WBC. In severe cases and cases with failure of the initial treatment tuboovarian abcess should be excluded by vaginal ultrasonography, CT or MRI imaging.

All patients should be offered screening for sexually transmitted infections and HIV testing discussed (Evidence level IV, C).

It is likely that delaying treatment increases the risk of long term sequelae such as ectopic pregnancy, infertility and pelvic pain. Because of this, and the lack of definitive diagnostic criteria, a low threshold for empiric treatment of PID is recommended (Evidence level IV, C).

In cases with suspected repeat PID, especially if it is of mild severity, other causes should be sought and treated accordingly, especially functional pain, pain originating in the ileopsoas muscles, the pelvic floor and urinary tract (Evidence level IV, C).

**Recommended Regimens**

Choice of treatment regime should be influenced by the following:

• Mild and moderated cases should be treated as outpatients with oral therapy (Evidence
level Ib, A).

- Intravenous therapy should be continued until 24 hours after clinical improvement and then switched to oral (Evidence level IV, C).

- Dosage recommendations may need to be adjusted slightly depending on local licensing regulations and the availability of drug formulations.

- The optimal duration of treatment is not known but most clinical trials report a response to 10-14 days of therapy.

The following antibiotic regimens are evidence based.

**Outpatient Regimens**

- i.m. ceftriaxone 250mg single dose. *or* [i.m. cefoxitin 2g single dose with oral probenecid 1g]

  followed by

  oral doxycycline 100mg twice daily *plus* metronidazole 400mg twice daily for 14 days

  (Evidence level Ia, A)

- oral ofloxacin 400mg twice daily *plus* oral metronidazole 500mg twice daily for 14 days

  (if ofloxacin is not available, it may be replaced by levofloxacin 500mg once daily)

  (Evidence level Ib, A)
Inpatient Regimens

- i.v. cefoxitin 2g four times daily (or i.v. cefotetan 2g twice daily or i.v./i.m. ceftriaxone 1g once daily) plus i.v. doxycycline 100mg twice daily (oral doxycycline may be used if tolerated) followed by oral doxycycline 100mg twice daily plus oral metronidazole 400mg twice daily for a total of 14 days.\(^2,14,15,16\)

(Evidence level Ia, A)

- i.v. clindamycin 900mg three times daily plus i.v. gentamicin (2mg/kg loading dose followed by 1.5mg/kg three times daily [a single daily dose may be substituted]) followed by either [oral clindamycin 450mg four times daily] [oral doxycycline 100mg twice daily to complete 14 days] plus oral metronidazole 400mg twice daily] to complete 14 days.\(^2,14,16\)

(Evidence level Ia, A)

Alternative Regimens

- i.v. ofloxacin 400mg twice daily plus i.v. metronidazole 500mg three times daily for 14 days.\(^2,15,16,19,20\)

(Evidence level Ib, B)

- i.v. ciprofloxacin 200mg twice daily plus i.v. (or oral) doxycycline 100mg twice daily plus i.v. metronidazole 500mg three times daily.\(^2,15,21\)
Where the above regimens are not available antibiotic therapy should be given for 14 days and attempt to cover:

- *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* e.g. cephalosporins
- *Chlamydia trachomatis* e.g. tetracyclines, macrolides
- anaerobic bacteria e.g. metronidazole

Metronidazole is included in the recommended outpatient regimens to improve coverage for anaerobic bacteria which may have a role in the pathogenesis of PID. Anaerobes are probably of relatively greater importance in patients with severe PID and some studies have shown good outcomes without the use of metronidazole. Metronidazole may therefore be discontinued in those patients with mild or moderate PID who are unable to tolerate it.

Ceftriaxone 1g i.m. or i.v. daily may be used when cefoxitin or cefotetan are not available since it offers a similar spectrum of activity, although with less effective cover for anaerobic infection.

Ofloxacin should be avoided in patients who are at high risk of gonococcal PID because of increasing reports of quinolone resistance in *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (e.g. avoid when the patient’s partner has gonorrhoea [or is from a high prevalence area] or the patient has clinically severe disease). The addition of a cephalosporin (e.g. ceftriaxone 250mg i.m. single dose) should be considered if gonococcal PID is suspected.
Levofloxacin is the L isomer of ofloxacin\textsuperscript{23} and has the advantage of once daily dosing (500mg OD for 14 days). It may provide a more convenient alternative to ofloxacin but no clinical trials in women with PID have been published for this agent\textsuperscript{2}.

**Partner notification**

- Current male partners of women with PID should be contacted and offered health advice and screening for gonorrhoea and chlamydia. Other recent sexual partners may also be offered screening - tracing of contacts within a 6 month period of onset of symptoms is recommended but this time period may be influenced by the sexual history.
- Partners should be advised to avoid unprotected intercourse until they and their partner have completed the treatment course.
- Gonorrhoea diagnosed in the male partner should be treated appropriately (see European Guidelines at [www.iusti.org](http://www.iusti.org)) and concurrently with the index patient.
- Concurrent empirical treatment for chlamydia is recommended (see European Guidelines at [www.iusti.org](http://www.iusti.org)) for all sexual contacts due to the variable sensitivity of currently available diagnostic tests.
- If adequate screening for gonorrhoea and chlamydia in the sexual partner(s) is not possible, empirical therapy for gonorrhoea and chlamydia should be given (see European Guidelines at [www.iusti.org](http://www.iusti.org)).
Follow Up

Review at 72 hours is recommended\(^2\), particularly for those with a moderate or severe clinical presentation, and should show a substantial improvement in clinical symptoms and signs. Failure to do so suggests the need for further investigation, parenteral therapy and/or surgical intervention. (Evidence level IV, C)

Repeat testing for gonorrhoea or chlamydia is appropriate in those with persistent symptoms, antibiotic resistance on microbiology testing (gonorrhoea only), poor compliance with antibiotics and/or inadequate tracing of sexual contacts where there is a possibility of persisting or recurrent infection.

Prevention/health promotion

Further review 4 weeks after therapy may be useful to ensure:

- adequate clinical response to treatment
- compliance with oral antibiotics
- screening and treatment of sexual contacts

Qualifying statement

Decisions to follow these recommendations must be based on the professional judgement of the clinician and consideration of individual patient circumstances and available resources.
All possible care has been undertaken to ensure the publication of the correct dosage of medication and route of administration. However, it remains the responsibility of the prescribing physician to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of the medication they prescribe.

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**Syndromic Management of Pelvic Inflammatory Disease**

*(for use where investigations are not initially available)*

- lower abdominal pain +/- abnormal vaginal/cervical discharge
  - with adnexal tenderness or cervical motion tenderness on bimanual examination

  **Yes**

  - missed or overdue period
  - sudden onset severe pain
  - bowel symptoms or signs
  - intermittent cyclical abdominal pain
  - positive pregnancy test

  **Yes**

  - Refer for further investigation

  **No**

  - screen for sexually transmitted diseases if possible
  - treat with recommended regimen (see below)
  - educate patient about PID
  - treat partner(s) with ceftriaxone 250mg i.m. single dose plus azithromycin 1g single dose
  - (or an alternative regimen locally effective against *N. gonorrhoeae* and *C. trachomatis*)
  - review after 3 days to ensure clinical improvement
Outpatient Regimens

- i.m. ceftriaxone 250mg single dose. or [i.m. cefoxitin 2g single dose with oral probenecid 1g] followed by oral doxycycline 100mg twice daily plus metronidazole 400mg twice daily for 14 days2,14,15,13,16

(Evidence level Ia, A)

- oral ofloxacin 400mg twice daily plus oral metronidazole 500mg twice daily for 14 days2,15,16,19,20

(Evidence level Ib, A)

Inpatient Regimens

- i.v. cefoxitin 2g four times daily (or i.v. cefotetan 2g twice daily or i.v./i.m. ceftriaxone 1g once daily) plus i.v. doxycycline 100mg twice daily (oral doxycycline may be used if tolerated) followed by oral doxycycline 100mg twice daily plus oral metronidazole 400mg twice daily for a total of 14 days2,14,15,16

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Alternative Regimens

- i.v. ofloxacin 400mg twice daily plus i.v. metronidazole 500mg three times daily for 14 days\textsuperscript{2,15,16,19,20} (Evidence level Ib, B)

- i.v. ciprofloxacin 200mg twice daily plus i.v. (or oral) doxycycline 100mg twice daily plus i.v. metronidazole 500mg three times daily\textsuperscript{2,15,21} (Evidence level Ib, B)

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Reference List


Ref Type: Data File


