COVID-19 Q&A with Dr. Milton Waner

Dr. Linda Rozell-Shannon, Phd, President and Founder of the VBF interviews Dr. Milton Waner, world renown vascular birthmarks, anomalies and related syndrome expert regarding COVID-19

Questions and Answers – March 22, 2020

1. Are patients who are currently taking a beta blocker for an infantile hemangioma at risk? If yes, what are the recommendations for the babies and/or or caregiver who either present with symptoms or test positive for COVID-19?

Answer: Not at an increased risk. If they are exposed, they must speak to their health care provider and let him/her know that they are taking a beta blocker.

2. Are patients who are taking Sirolimus or other chemotherapy agents for a vascular malformation at risk and if so, what are the recommendations for the patients and/or their caregivers who present with symptoms or are diagnosed with COVID-19?

Answer: We don’t know what the risks are. We have no data. We do know the drug is an immunosuppressant. Consult your doctor.

3. Are infants treated with chemotherapy agents for complex vascular tumors or related syndromes such as KHE or KMP/S at risk and if yes, what are the precautions for them or their caregivers should they present with symptoms and/or are diagnosed with COVID-19?

Answer: Same answer as 2.

4. Should patients with complex Lymphatic Malformations which are reactive to viruses and/or infections have a supply of antibiotics and/or steroids on hand in case they or a caregiver are exposed to or are diagnosed with COVID-19?

Answer: Consult with their treating physician.

5. Should infants diagnosed with airway Infantile Hemangioma take any special precautions if they are their caregiver are exposed to or are diagnosed with COVID-19?

Answer: No special precautions but should continue with treatment.

6. Should patients being treated for Gorham-Stout Disease, especially those affected in their rib cage, be isolated during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer: Consult with their treating physician.
7. Should any patients who are receiving invasive surgery for a complex vascular anomaly be isolated for a specific period of time following their release from the hospital due to the threat of COVID-19?

Answer: No special precautions unless exposed. If exposed, consult surgeon immediately.

8. What precautions, if any, are warranted for patients with SWS who are taking anti-seizure meds regarding COVID-19?

It is known that fever increases the risk of seizure so immediately consult SWS treatment specialist if exposed and if a fever is present. It is also important to continue all medications.

9. What precautions, if any, are warranted for patients with KTS who are receiving wound care for open lesions if they or a caregiver are exposed to or diagnosed with COVID-19?

Answer: No special precautions. Continue wound care. Whoever dresses wound should wear a mask and gloves.

10. Will there be telemedicine options available for families affected by a vascular birthmark, anomaly, and/or related syndrome?

Answer: Dr. Waner is offering telemedicine. Call his office at 212-434-4050 with questions/concerns.

11. Are there any precautions for infants who are on a combined steroid/propranolol treatment regimen?

Answers: Steroids are an immunosuppressant. We don’t know yet the comorbidity. Consult with treating physicians.

12. If some of our patients contract COVID-19 and are given the proposed treatments which consist of possibly the chloroquine and/or azithromycin combo, do they have any concerns or precautions?

Answer: There has been some cross reactivity with beta blockers. If the child is exposed you should discuss this immediately with your health care provider.

13. Which treatments do you consider “non-essential”

Answer: Treatments should remain on schedule, when possible.

14. Many parents are worried about discontinuing laser at this time and losing ground by missing appointments. Will they be able to catch up? Will the delay in treatment impede clearance?

Answer: They will be able to catch up. It may be a slight step back but they can catch up. They may require more treatments. Dr. Waner would like laser treatments to be continued, when permitted.
15. There has been talk about not using Advil. Should patients who have pain with a vascular birthmark/anomaly or related syndrome also avoid Advil during this time and what would you recommend for daily pain management? Tylenol?

A. We don’t know for sure if Advil is contraindicated or not. Because there is some doubt, it’s best to use Tylenol.