Anti-Infective Dosing Protocols: Meropenem, Cefepime, and Piperacillin/tazobactam
The pharmacodynamic parameter that best correlates with optimal activity of β-lactams is the proportion of the dosing interval that the free drug concentration remains above the minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) for the infecting organism – %fT>MIC (killing maximized at 4x MIC).

Pharmacodynamic Targets

- The targets for %fT>MIC vary among the different sub-classes of β-lactams and organisms as illustrated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathogen</th>
<th>Carbapenems (%fT&gt;MIC)</th>
<th>Penicillins (%fT&gt;MIC)</th>
<th>Cephalosporins (%fT&gt;MIC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gram-positive</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>40-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gram-negative</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>60-70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impact of MIC value on Pharmacodynamic Targets

If given a beta-lactam antibiotic via standard 30-minute infusion:

- Isolate #1: MIC = 1 mg/L
  - ~30% T>MIC

- Isolate #2: MIC = 2 mg/L
  - ~50% T>MIC

The breakpoint for susceptibility = 4 mg/L, therefore both isolates are susceptible, but isolate #2 has a higher MIC & therefore less T>MIC when administered the same dose.
A random selection of 30 blood isolates and 12 sputum isolates growing *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* were evaluated, and MICs were obtained via Sensititre susceptibility plates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Susceptible MIC (mg/L)</th>
<th>MIC&lt;sub&gt;50&lt;/sub&gt; (mg/L)</th>
<th>MIC&lt;sub&gt;90&lt;/sub&gt; (mg/L)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meropenem</td>
<td>≤ 1</td>
<td>≤ 1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cefepime</td>
<td>≤ 8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piperacillin/tazobactam</td>
<td>≤ 64</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>≥ 64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MIC<sub>50</sub> = MIC needed to inhibit the growth of 50% of the isolates

MIC<sub>90</sub> = MIC needed to inhibit the growth of 90% of the isolates
Summary

• From the table, one can see that at the MIC needed to inhibit 90% of *P. aeruginosa* for all 3 drugs is at or above the breakpoint for susceptibility.

• Therefore, it will be difficult to achieve adequate PK/PD targets for both cefepime and piperacillin/tazobactam.
How can we optimize %fT>MIC?

1. Give the drug more frequently (decrease the dosing interval)
2. Extend the infusion of the drug
3. Increase dose (less useful for agents with short half-lives)
How can we optimize %fT>MIC?

1. Give the drug more frequently (decrease the dosing interval)
   - Meropenem
   - Cefepime

2. Extend the infusion of the drug
   - Piperacillin/Tazobactam
Give the Drug More Frequently

• Meropenem
  – Standard dose: 1g IV q8h
  – Dosage substitution: 500mg IV q6h

• Cefepime
  – Standard dose: 2g IV q8h
  – Dosage substitution: 1g IV q6h
Meropenem Target Attainment vs. *P. aeruginosa*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regimen</th>
<th>0.25</th>
<th>0.5</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1g q8h</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99-100</td>
<td>95-99</td>
<td>85-93</td>
<td>65-70</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500mg q6h</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Probability of target attainment is similar for doses of 1g IV q8h and 500mg IV q6h (both at the desired probability of ≥90%), up to an MIC of 2 mg/L.
- Conclusion: A regimen of 500mg IV q6h is able to achieve a similar probability of target attainment with a decrease in overall drug administered.
**Meropenem Dosing Substitution**

- For all adults and children **> 50kg** (normal renal function*):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication Ordered</th>
<th>Interchange With</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meropenem 1g q8h</td>
<td>Meropenem 500mg q6h**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meropenem 1g q12h</td>
<td>Meropenem 500mg q8h**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meropenem 500mg q8h</td>
<td>Meropenem 500mg q8h**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meropenem 2g q8h**</td>
<td>Meropenem 2g q8h**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imipenem 500mg q6h</td>
<td>Meropenem 500mg q6h**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imipenem 500mg q8h</td>
<td>Meropenem 500mg q8h**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imipenem 1g q8h</td>
<td>Meropenem 500mg q6h**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imipenem 750mg q12h</td>
<td>Meropenem 500mg q8h**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imipenem 250mg q6h</td>
<td>Meropenem 500mg q8h**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- See full protocol details online for pediatric and renal dosage adjustment recommendations.

- If there is any question about the indication for meropenem, the prescriber should be contacted for clarification.
**Special populations**

- Meropenem dosing: 2g IV q8hr
- The only indications for which this dose is appropriate are:
  - Meningitis
  - Cystic Fibrosis
  - Micro-organisms with a meropenem/imipenem MIC of 4mg/L
**Special populations**

- Prescriber orders meropenem 1g q8hr in a patient w/ meningitis. Dose should be automatically adjusted by the pharmacist to 2g q8hr.

- Prescriber orders meropenem 2g q8hr in a patient w/ sepsis of unknown source. Dose should be automatically adjusted by the pharmacist to 500mg q6hr.

- Prescriber orders meropenem 500mg q6hr for empiric treatment of nosocomial pneumonia. Previous sputum culture yielded Acinetobacter with a meropenem MIC of 4 mg/L. Dose should be automatically adjusted by the pharmacist to 2g q8hr and modified to 500mg q6hr if the new culture yields an organism with a lower MIC.
The probability of target attainment is similar for doses of 2g IV q8h and 1g IV q6h, both at a desired probability of ≥90%, up to the susceptibility breakpoint of 8 mg/L and both regimens are superior to 2g IV q12h.

Conclusion: A regimen of 1g IV q6h is able to achieve a similar probability of target attainment with a decrease in overall drug administered.
Cefepime Dosing Substitution

- For all adults and children weighing > 40 kg (normal renal function*):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication Ordered</th>
<th>Interchange With</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cefepime 1g q12h</td>
<td>Cefepime 1g q12h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cefepime 2g q12h</td>
<td>Cefepime 1g q6h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cefepime 2g q8h</td>
<td>Cefepime 1g q6h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cefepime 2g q8h for “Neutropenic fever”</td>
<td>Cefepime 2g q8h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See full protocol details online for renal dosage adjustment recommendations.
Cefepime Exceptions

- **1g q12h**
  - Dose only appropriate for community-acquired pneumonia not due to *P. aeruginosa* or mild to moderate urinary tract infection. If 1g q12h is ordered for any other indication, dose will be interchanged to 1g q6h.

- **2g q8h**
  - Cefepime 2g q 8h allowed **only in “neutropenic fever”**
  - Ordering clinicians **must write** the indication (“neutropenic fever”) after ordering this dose.
  - In patients whom 2 g q 8h is ordered with no indication, pharmacists will review laboratory data as follows:
    - If the Absolute Neutrophil Count (ANC) is ≤500, the 2g q8hr dose will be provided. All other orders will be interchanged to 1g q6hr.
How can we optimize %fT>MIC?

1. Give the drug more frequently (decrease the dosing interval)

2. Extend the infusion of the drug
Extend the Infusion of the Drug

- **Piperacillin/tazobactam**
  - Standard dose: 3.375g IV q6h or 4.5g IV q6h over 30min
  - Dosage substitution: *4.5g IV infused over 4h*
Piperacillin/tazobactam Target Attainment vs. *P. aeruginosa*

- The dose of 3.375g q8h over 4h achieves over 90% probability of target attainment up to an MIC of 16 mg/L versus an MIC of 1 mg/L for the standard dose of 3.375g q6h over 30min.

Problem:

- When infusing piperacillin/tazobactam over four hours via the Alaris pump, ~20 ml of residual piperacillin/tazobactam remains in the IV infusion set at the end of infusion
  - This represents a significant potential for underdosing
Extended infusion: Alaris pump considerations

- Solution:
  - Administer 4.5g piperacillin/tazobactam in a 100 ml bag
  - This ensures that the patient will still receive the minimum studied dose of 3.375g
    - e.g. If the line is not flushed (~20% of the 4.5g dose is not administered to patient) the patient will still be receiving at least 3.375g
Piperacillin/tazobactam Dosing Substitution

- All doses of piperacillin/tazobactam will be interchanged to the following doses for adults and pediatrics > 40kg*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creatinine Clearance ≥ 20 ml/min</th>
<th>Creatinine Clearance &lt; 20 ml/min (including HD or PD)</th>
<th>CRRT/SLED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.5g IV over 4h q8h</td>
<td>4.5g IV over 4h q12h</td>
<td>4.5g IV over 4h q8h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For pediatric patients ≤ 40kg, the normal dose will be given but will be infused over 4h. NICU patients are excluded from this protocol.
Piperacillin/tazobactam Dosing Substitution

Exceptions to extended interval substitution:

1. NICU patients

2. First dose as Surgical Prophylaxis
   - PTZ as pre-operative and intraoperative surgical prophylaxis will receive 4.5g over 30 minutes guided by suggested intra-operative dosing intervals
   - Post-operative doses will be given using the extended infusion protocol and started 6 hours after the most recent dose

3. First dose in the Emergency Department and Lied Infusion Center
   - 4.5g over 30 minutes
   - Subsequent doses will be given using the extended infusion protocol and started 6 hours after the initial dose
Renal Dosage Adjustment

- As delineated in the renal dosage adjustment policy for the respective antibiotics
- Adjustment should be as follows:
  a. Dosage substitution first
  b. Renal adjustment next
  - For example, meropenem 1g IV q8hr is ordered for a septic patient with CrCl of 30ml/min
    1. Adjust meropenem 1g IV q8hr to 500mg IV q6hr
    2. Then adjust 500mg IV q6h for renal function = 500mg IV q8hr
In Summary

- In order to optimize the pharmacodynamics of meropenem, cefepime, and piperacillin/tazobactam, dosing substitution protocols have been approved for inpatients at The Nebraska Medical Center.

- The alternate doses provide a high probability of pharmacodynamic target attainment at increased MICs, higher likelihood of positive patient outcomes, and likely contribute to the prevention of antimicrobial resistance while reducing costs.

- Pharmacists are responsible for changing the doses according to the protocols, so please ensure that you are familiar with the protocols.
Visit the Antimicrobial Stewardship Program website for complete dosing protocols:
www.nebraskamed.com/asp
For more information…

- Visit the Pharmaceutical & Nutrition Website
  - View the dosage substitution policies
If you have any questions…

- For further information please contact:
  
  Alan Gross, PharmD  
  Antimicrobial Stewardship Coordinator  
  The Nebraska Medical Center  
  Phone: 405-559-4149  
  Email: agross@nebraskamed.com

  Trevor C. VanSchooneveld, M.D.  
  Antimicrobial Stewardship Program, Medical Director  
  The Nebraska Medical Center  
  Phone: 402-559-8376  
  Email: tvanscho@unmc.edu

- Slides prepared by Jessica Njoku, PharmD BCPS