

C. Issues of Administration

1. Jet Injector Use

Please see Appendix E for AFEB recommendations specific to the current policy on jet injectors. Prior to the current moratorium on jet injector use, we questioned medical personnel at recruit training sites and at the service level about their use of jet injectors. Personnel authorized to use the injectors in addition to physicians and registered nurses included medical technicians, corpsmen, physician assistants, and licensed practical nurses. As required by the Joint Instruction on Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis, all sites that used the injectors reported training personnel using a combination of formal classroom and on-the-job training. They reported their sterilization practices were consistent with the policy in the Joint Instruction on Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis and with manufacturers' recommendations. Acetone or alcohol wipes were used to clean the tips after each inoculation, nozzles visibly contaminated with blood were replaced and sterilized before additional use, and all injector nozzles were cleaned and sterilized daily. All services reported using the injectors routinely. Vaccines administered by jet injection included hepatitis B, influenza, MMR/MR, meningococcal, tetanus-diphtheria, and yellow fever. Some Army recruit sites did not use the jet injectors. The Navy and Marine Corps reported that they did not use jet injectors on smaller ships because there were more doses in the vaccine vials than personnel to be immunized. The Coast Guard used its jet injector only for mass influenza inoculations.

Of note is that the AFEB made a site visit to the MTF at Parris Island and directly observed high volume recruit immunization using jet injectors. It was noted that jet injector nozzle's were frequently contaminated with blood, yet sterilization practices were frequently inadequate or not followed.

D. Issues of Vaccine Information and Consent

1. Introduction

Members of the military as a condition of their military service are required to receive specific vaccines. The Department of Defense (DoD) and the Services have established policies requiring immunization of all members of the Armed Forces. DoD Instruction 5205.2, Immunizations Requirements, requires "implementation of programs that minimize individual illness and disability, days lost from work, and impairment of operational capabilities from conditions that are preventable through immunization." The Services' Surgeons General have issued a joint instruction, Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis, that identifies "mandatory vaccinations for military personnel." DoD Directive 6205.3, DoD Immunization Program for Biological Warfare Defense, provides vaccination guidance focused exclusively on defense against biological warfare threats.