

**TREATMENT OF PRIMARY ANTIBODY DEFICIENCY IN GERMANY – RESULTS OF A SURVEY CONDUCTED DURING SUMMER 2002**

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Primary antibody deficiencies are the most common forms of primary immunodeficiencies (PID). Recurrent bacterial infections and the risk of progressive structural tissue damage are the most serious complications of these diseases. Substitution therapy with polyvalent immunoglobulins (Ig) has been established as the standard therapy in PID for several decades now.

During summer 2002 German PID treaters were interviewed in a survey in order to assess the present status of immunoglobulin therapy in German patients with antibody deficiencies. A disease questionnaire was used during standardized interviews. Information was sought on the treating physician and center, the kind of immunodeficiency and its complications. Furthermore, details on the Ig therapy, e.g. trough levels, doses, dosing intervals, and mode of application were asked. Additional information concerned routine diagnostic procedures and concomitant medication.

Eighteen physicians from different regions in Germany took part in the survey, 13 of them worked in pediatric centers and 5 had a specialization in internal medicine. These physicians treated a total of 237 antibody deficient patients at the time of the interview. Most of the patients received Ig substitution therapy, most frequently as intravenous infusions in a hospital outpatient setting. Approximately 14% of the substituted patients received subcutaneous immunoglobulin, mostly as self-infusions at home. At the time of the interviews subcutaneous application of Ig had not yet been licensed in Germany.

