Developed for Scotland by the National Plasma Product Expert Advisory Group

Clinical Guidelines for Human Albumin Use
National Plasma Products Expert Advisory Group

Guidelines for the Usage of Human Albumin Solution (HAS) at WIG/GGH

1. **Ascites and large volume paracentesis:**

   Where management of ascites is *refractory* to sodium restriction (90mmol/day) HAS is indicated following paracentesis (British Society of Gastroenterology Guidelines, 2006; EASL clinical practice guidelines, 2010). Paracentesis without albumin replacement leads to a fall in pulmonary capillary wedge pressure, maximal at 6 hours, and can result in circulatory and renal dysfunction.

   Where there is *normal* premorbid renal function:
   - Administer 1 unit (100ml) HAS 20% (STAT) following every 3 litres of ascites drained.

   Where renal function is *impaired* consider either:
   - Administration of 100ml HAS 20% per 2 litres of ascites.
   - or adherence to the protocol for hepatorenal syndrome (see below).

2. **Spontaneous bacterial peritonitis (SBP):**

   Administration of HAS in the setting of SBP reduces the incidence of renal failure and reduces mortality (British Society of Gastroenterology Guidelines, 2006; EASL clinical practice guidelines, 2010):
   - **Day 1:** 1.5g HAS / kg given over a 6 hour period:
   - **Day 3:** 1g HAS / kg given over 3 hours

3. **Hepatorenal syndrome (HRS)**

   Administration of HAS and vasoconstrictors are effective therapy in 60% of patients with HRS and is associated with improved survival (EASL clinical practice guidelines, 2010):
   - **Terlipressin:** 0.5 – 2mg iv every 4 hours, plus
   - **Day 1:** 1g / kg HAS
   - **Day 2 - 16:** 20 – 40 g HAS / day

   Rx continued until serum creatinine falls below 130mol/l. NB. Where creatinine is *rising* despite Rx, 60g HAS /day may be clinically indicated.

**Therapeutic apheresis (Therapeutic Plasma Exchange TPE)**

TPE has a clearly defined role in a large variety of conditions that are presumed to be
immunologically mediated. The indications for TPE are protean and listed in a recent
guideline produced by the American Society for Apheresis (Szczechorskzowski et al 2010).
The standard replacement fluid for TPE is 5% HAS with or without saline. FFP / Octaplas
may be indicated dependent on the indication ie. TTP. The volume treated per procedure is
usually: 1–1.5 total plasma volumes (TPV). Procedures may continue daily for up to
several weeks in some cases.

Other indications

There is little evidence to support the use of HAS in other circumstances (Cochrane Injuries
Group 2011; Jacob et al 2008; Kuper et al 2007; Perel and Roberts 2011) and these require
discussion with pharmacy or haematology medical staff before release can be sanctioned, unless
specifically requested a Consultant Physician with frequent experience of HAS administration
(eg. gastroenterology Consultant).

Volume expansion – Synthetic alternatives or Saline may be used for temporary intravascular
volume expansion. No studies have convincingly shown that 5% Albumin confers any survival
advantage.

Requesting Human Albumin Solution:

Human Albumin Solution (HAS) is available from the Hospital Pharmacy. The indication for its
use should be documented in the case notes and there should be written documentation of
its prescription.

The products in stock are:

**Human Albumin Solution 5% 500ml (approx. 25g albumin) & 100ml (approx. 5g albumin)**

**Human Albumin Solution 20% 100ml (approx. 20g albumin)**

**Administration:**

20% Albumin is hyperoncotic. The 100ml volume will expand to approximately 400mls within 25
minutes of transfusion. Rapid administration can lead to rapid volume expansion and cardiac
failure. There is no UK published data regarding 20% Albumin infusion rates; in clinical practice it
is usual to infuse 100mls over 30 minutes (personal communication AL/RS), but infusion rate
varies and depends on clinical circumstances.

**References:**

British Society of Gastroenterology – Guidelines for the management of ascites in cirrhosis. Gut
2006 ; 55: 1 – 12.

Cochrane Injuries Group. Albumin Reviewers. Human albumin solution for resuscitation and

EASL clinical practice guidelines on the management of ascites, spontaneous bacterial peritonitis

Jacob M et al: Small-volume resuscitation with hyperoncotic albumin: a systematic review of
randomized clinical trials. Critical Care 2008 Vol 12 No 2 R34.


**Acknowledgements:**

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Dr Anne-Louise Latif, Speciality Registrar Haematology, NHS GG&C.
### SUMMARY OF INDICATIONS FOR HUMAN ALBUMIN SOLUTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATION</th>
<th>ALBUMIN PRODUCT</th>
<th>MAY BE AUTHORISED BY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Large volume paracentesis (drainage of ascites) in patient with chronic liver disease.</td>
<td>HAS 20% 100ml 1 bottle per every 3L ascites drained (increased to 1 bottle every per every 2L if renal function impaired).</td>
<td>Junior medical staff on advice of Consultant Gastroenterologist or ITU Consultant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Large volume paracentesis (drainage of ascites) in patient with ascites not due to chronic liver disease.</td>
<td>May be indicated dependent on clinical circumstances.</td>
<td>Refer request to duty Pharmacy / Consultant Haematologist.</td>
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<td>3. Spontaneous bacterial peritonitis (SBP).</td>
<td>HAS 20% 100ml 1.5g/kg on day one (usually 4-8 bottles), then 1g/kg on day 3 (usually 2-5 bottles) or HAS 5% 500ml 1g.5/kg on day one (usually 3-6 bottles), then 1g/kg on day 3 (usually 2-4 bottles).</td>
<td>Junior medical staff on advice of Consultant Gastroenterologist or ITU Consultant. 5% or 20% products at discretion of Gastroenterologist or ITU Consultant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Hepatorenal syndrome.</td>
<td>HAS 20% 100ml 1g/kg on day (usually 2-5 bottles) or HAS 5% 500ml 1g/kg on day 1 (usually 2-4 bottles) then HAS 20% 100ml or HAS 5% 500ml 1-2 bottles daily for 2-16 days (occasionally 3 bottles/day).</td>
<td>Junior medical staff on advice of Consultant Gastroenterologist or ITU Consultant. 5% or 20% products at discretion of Gastroenterologist or ITU Consultant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Therapeutic Apheresis</td>
<td>HAS 5% 500ml 1-1.5 plasma volumes daily</td>
<td>At request of Consultant Haematologist, Apheresis Unit staff</td>
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<td>6. Low serum albumin in haemodynamically unstable patient in critical care (HDU or ITU).</td>
<td>Occasionally HAS 20% may be indicated.</td>
<td>At request of Consultant Anaesthetist/Intensivist in ITU/HDU.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Low serum albumin in the absence of ascites, SBP or hepatorenal syndrome.</td>
<td>Not usually indicated.</td>
<td>Refer request to duty Pharmacist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. All other requests.</td>
<td>Other indications are rare.</td>
<td>Refer request to duty Pharmacist.</td>
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