

Frequency of Etiological Agents and the Clinical Outcome of Acute Bacterial Meningitis

SYEDA FATIMA SUGHRA RIZVI¹, UMAIR ARIF², MUHAMMAD UR REHMAN KHAN³

ABSTRACT

Aim: To determine the frequency of survival and common etiological agents (i.e., *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Neisseria meningitidis* and *Haemophilus influenzae*) in CSF-culture positive acute bacterial meningitis.

Methods: This case series study was conducted at Department of Pathology, Quaid-e-Azam Medical College Bahawalpur from May 2014 to November 2014. Total 292 cases of CSF culture positive acute bacterial meningitis, having age from 15-65 years either male or female were selected for this study.

Results: Mean age of the patients in this study was 39.98 ± 17.57 years. *Streptococcus pneumoniae* was detected in 153 (52%) patients followed by *Neisseria meningitidis* 105 (36%), *Haemophilus influenzae* 34 (12%). Survival rate in this study was 239 (82%) and 53 (18%) patients were expired.

Conclusion: *Streptococcus pneumoniae* was the most common etiological agent which cause acute bacterial meningitis. Male are more victim of acute bacterial meningitis as compared to female. Survival rate is not associated with gender of the patients. Survival rate is significantly associated with age of the patients.

Keywords: Meningitis, Lactate dehydrogenase, Cerebrospinal fluid, Meningococcus, Invasive meningococcal disease, Meningitis, Epidemiology, Meningitis belt

INTRODUCTION

Acute Bacterial Meningitis (ABM) is an acute purulent infection within the subarachnoid space. It is the most common and dreadful CNS infection, carrying high mortality and morbidity.¹ Globally 1.2 million new cases are diagnosed annually². It contributes to a significant proportion of admissions in Medical and High Dependency Units of the hospitals.

In adults, ABM is commonly caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Neisseria meningitidis*, *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, and the gram negative bacilli *Escherichia coli* and *Klebsiella*.³ In one study of 121 patients with ABM, *S. pneumoniae* accounted for majority of cases (47.4%), followed by *N. meningitidis* (33.9%), and *H. influenzae* (10.2%)⁴. Less common causes include *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Proteus*. Rare causes are *Acinetobacter*, Group B *Streptococci*, and *Streptococcal viridians*.

ABM has a wide spectrum of clinical presentations including fever, headache, neck stiffness and altered sensorium. The disease has a high rate of complications (68%)⁵. Common complications include seizures, hydrocephalus, cranial nerve palsies, mono- or hemiplegia, and

intracranial thrombosis. ABM carries an overall mortality of 14%. Highest mortality is for *S. pneumoniae* (19-37%), followed by *N. meningitidis* (10%) and *H. Influenzae* (5%)⁶. In general, risk of death from ABM increases with decreased level of consciousness at presentation, early onset of seizures i.e. within 24-hours of admission, signs of raised intracranial pressure, old age > 50 years, co-morbidities including diabetes mellitus, and delay in the early diagnosis and/ or prompt treatment. Decreased Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF) glucose concentration (< 40 mg/ ml) and markedly increased CSF protein concentration (>300 mg/ ml) are other predictors of increased mortality and poorer outcome⁷.

The diagnosis of ABM relies on CSF complete examination (C/E) while the identification of its etiological agent(s) requires CSF Gram Stain and Culture & Sensitivity. The CSF Culture for etiological agent is positive in 70-90% cases of ABM⁸. Before performing diagnostic Lumbar Puncture (LP) it is prudent to rule out any Space Occupying Lesion (SOL) Brain or markedly raised intracranial pressure by CT-Scan brain and fundoscopy.

In view of above, the present study will determine the frequency of common etiological agents of ABM on the basis of CSF culture & sensitivity, as well as the clinical outcome of disease. This may help to guide the treating physicians regarding the more prevalent causes and the different complications of ABM in our patients.

¹Demonstrator Pathology, Quaid-e-Azam Medical College Bahawalpur

²Senior Registrar Medicine, BVH Bahawalpur

³HO, Department of Medicine, BVH Bahawalpur

Correspondence to Dr. Syeda Fatima Sughra Rizvi, E-mail: dr.fatimarizvi@yahoo.com, Cell: 03225174472

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This case series study was conducted at Department of Pathology, Quaid-e-Azam Medical College Bahawalpur from May 2014 to November 2014. Total 292 cases of CSF culture positive acute bacterial meningitis, having age from 15-65 years either male or female were selected for this study. Partially treated cases of ABM, CT Brain evidence of SOL / Intra cranial hemorrhage, CSF with > 50% lymphocytic pleocytosis for viral meningoencephalitis, Tuberculous meningitis (ZN Stain pos+ CSF), Cerebral malaria (MP pos+Blood film), Hematological malignancy i.e. leukemia and lymphoma(suggestive blood peripheral morphology), Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (Serum ANA pos+) were excluded from the study. Approval was taken from institution review committee and written informed consent was taken from attendant of patients.

Operational definitions:

1) CSF-Culture positive: It is demonstration of specific bacterial growth on culture of collected CSF samples i.e., Streptococcus pneumoniae- Gram stain showing lancet-shaped gram positive capsulated diplococci; On culture forming small round alpha hemolytic colonies in blood agar.

Neisseria meningitides--Gram stain showing paired kidney beans shaped gram negative capsulated cocci; on culture forming oxidase-positive colonies in chocolate agar.

Haemophilus influenza--Gram stain showing small gram negative capsulated rods; on culture forming colonies in enriched-chocolate agar (Heme and Factor V-enriched)⁹

2) Acute Bacterial Meningitis: Patients presenting with less than 7 days history of neck rigidity in addition to any of the following complaints(s): Fever > 100°F, Headache (subjective complaint on clinical history), and/or Altered sensorium (Decreased Glasgow Coma Scale score <15/15). (On clinical examination patients having signs of meningeal irritation i.e. Neck stiffness (Pain and resistance on passive neck flexion.) Kernig's sign (Pain in hamstring muscles of tight on knee extension. Beyond 90° with hip flexed at 90°), The diagnostic LP showing presence of all of the following: WBCs > 100/ ml with > 50% of neutrophilic pleocytosis in CSF, CSF proteins > 45 mg/ ml, CSF glucose < 40 mg/ ml or < 40% of simultaneous serum glucose level.⁷

Survival Rate: Mortality was defined as the death of patient after 24 hours and within 7 days of hospital stay while on treatment of AB M. (Patient was followed till 7 days while on treatment of ABM).

The patients presenting with signs and symptoms of acute bacterial meningitis was admitted in the hospital. After excluding any SOL brain by CT-

Scan Brain and fundoscopy, patient was put in either sitting or lateral recumbent position. After strict antiseptic measures and giving local anesthesia, diagnostic lumbar puncture was done in L4/L5 or L3/L4 intervertebral space to obtain 10 mL of CSF for C/E, Grams stain and Culture & sensitivity. Sample was collected in sterile bottle. CSF was inoculated in blood, chocolate and thiomartin agar plates. The result of CSF Culture & Sensitivity and the clinical outcome of disease was entered in the patient proforma. All the data was entered and analyzed in SPSS Version 16. Mean and standard deviation was calculated for numerical data like age and duration of hospital stay. Frequencies were calculated for every etiological agent (Streptococcus pneumoniae, Neisseria meningitides and Haemophilus influenza) and survival. Stratification was done for age, gender and duration of hospital stay after stratification chi-square test was applied to see the level of significance. P value ≤ 0.5 was considered significant.

RESULTS

Mean age of the patients in this study was 39.98±17.57 years. Among the 292 patients of ABM, Streptococcus pneumoniae was detected in 153(52%) patients followed by Neisseria meningitides 105(36%), Haemophilus influenza 34(12%) (Fig. 1). Survival rate in this study was 239(82%) and 53(18%) patients expired.

As shown in table 1 Streptococcus pneumoniae was found in 153(52.40%) patients and 116(75.82%) were survived. Among the 105(35.96%) with Neisseria meningitides survival rate was 95(90.48%). Out of 34(11.64%) patients with Haemophilus influenzae, survival rate was 28(82.35%). Significant (P. value 0.011) association was found between etiological agent and survival of the patients.

Stratification for gender was done. Among 178 (60.96%) male patients, survival rate was 147 (82.58%) and out of 114(39.04%) female patients, survival rate was 92 (80.7%). Insignificant (P. value 0.684) association was found between gender and survival of the patients (Table 2).

As shown in table 3, two age groups were made i.e. age group 15-40 years and age group 41-65 years. Among the 147 (50.34%) of age group 15-40 years survival rate of the patients was 133 (90.38%). Out of 145(49.66%) patients of age group 41-65 years, survival rate was 106(73.1%). A significant association of age with rate of survival was seen. P. value 0.000.

Duration of hospital stay of the patients was divided into two groups i.e., 1-3 days group and 4-7 days group. Total 149(51%) patients belonged to 1-3

days group and 143 (49%) patients belonged to 4-7 days group. Survival rate was 26(17.5%) and 27(18.88%) of group 1-3 days and 4-7 days respectively. Insignificant ($P=0.764$) association between duration of hospital stay and survival rate was seen (Table 4).

Fig. 1: Pattern of etiological agents in patients of ABM

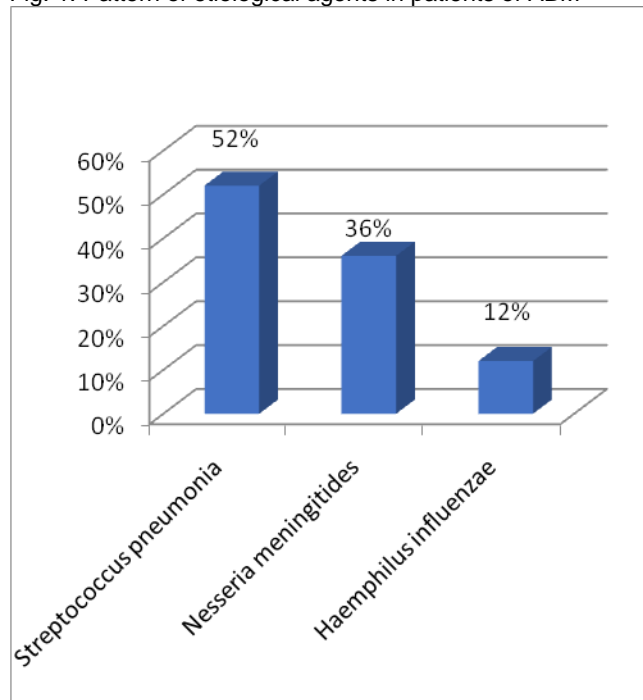


Table 1: Association of etiological agent with survival

Etiological agents	Survival		Total
	No	Yes	
Streptococcus pneumoniae	37(24.18%)	116(75.82%)	153(52.40%)
Neisseria meningitidis	10(9.52%)	95(90.48%)	105(35.96%)
Haemophilus influenzae	6(17.65%)	28(82.35%)	34(11.64%)
Total	53(18.15%)	239(81.85%)	292

P value: 0.011

Table 2: Association of gender with survival

Gender	Survival		Total
	No	Yes	
Male	31(17.42%)	147(82.58%)	178(60.96%)
Female	22(19.3%)	92(80.7%)	114(39.04%)

P value: 0.684

Table 3: Association of age with survival

Age groups	Survival		Total
	No	Yes	
15-40	14(9.52%)	133(90.48%)	147(50.34%)
41-65	39(26.9%)	106(73.1%)	145(49.66%)
Total	53(18.15%)	239(81.85%)	292

P value 0.000

Table 4: Association of duration of hospital stay with survival

Duration of hospital stay	Survival		Total
	No	Yes	
1-3	26(17.5%)	123(82.5%)	149(51%)
4-7	27(18.88%)	116(81.12%)	143(49%)
Total	53(18.15%)	239(81.85%)	292

P value: 0.764

DISCUSSION

Meningitis is an infection of the membranes (meninges) surrounding the brain and spinal cord. Meningitis is usually of multiple etiology-bacterial, fungal or viral yet bacteria remain the common etiological agent. Meningitis can be acute, with a quick onset of symptoms, or chronic, lasting a month or more, or can be mild or aseptic, but the emphasis should be on identification of cause so that appropriate interventions can be applied¹⁰.

Bacterial meningitis continues to be a potentially life threatening emergency with significant morbidity and mortality throughout the world and is an even more significant problem in many other areas of the world, especially in developing countries¹¹⁻¹².

In present study mean age of the patients with acute bacterial meningitis was 39.98 ± 17.57 years. Mean age of the patients of acute bacterial meningitis was 41 ± 12.3 years reported by Ahmad et al¹³.

In our study among the 292 patients of ABM, Streptococcus pneumoniae was most common (52%) patients followed by Neisseria meningitidis 36%, Haemophilus influenza in 12% cases. In one study by Abdulrab et al⁴ 121 patients with acute bacterial meningitis were recruited and Lumbar puncture was performed in 112(92.6%). The most common pathogen was Streptococcus pneumoniae found in 47.4% of positive cultures, Neisseria meningitidis in 33.9%, and Haemophilus influenzae in 10.2%. Findings of this study are in favor of our study.

Ahmad et al¹³ also reported the most common organisms isolated were Streptococcus pneumoniae in 35(36.8%) patients followed by Neisseria meningitidis in 30(31.5%) patients. Findings of this study are also similar with our study.

Abro et al¹⁴ among 53 bacterial meningitis patients, Neisseria meningitidis were isolated in 29(54.7%), Strept. Pneumoniae in 18(33.96%), Staph. Aureus in 2(3.77%), Klebsiell Pneumoniae in 2(3.77%), Strept. Agalactiae in 1(1.8%) and E.Coli in 1(1.8%). Results of this study are not in favor of our study because in our study the most common isolated etiological agent was Streptococcus pneumoniae but in this study the most common isolated etiological agent is Neisseria meningitidis.

In our study survival rate was 239 (82%) and 53 (18%) were expired. In one study by Abdulrab et al,⁴ mortality rate in patients with acute bacterial meningitis was 22.3% which is comparable with our study. Abro et al¹⁴ reported mortality rate as 7.54% which is lower than our study.

In our study male are more victim of acute bacterial meningitis as compare to female. In cases with bacterial meningitis there is a slight male predominance reported by Ahmad et al.¹³ Male predominance was also seen by Abro et al in their study. In their study male patients were 84.21% and female patients were 15.78%.

CONCLUSION

Streptococcus pneumoniae was the most common etiological agent which cause acute bacterial meningitis. Males are more victim of acute bacterial meningitis as compared to females. Survival rate is not associated with gender of the patients. Survival rate is significantly associated with age of the patients.

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