

A-03 Patterns of humoral immunodeficiency in Sri Lanka

N R de Silva, Scpali Gunewardena, H Ratnayake, A Weerasinghe
Div of Immunology, Medical Research Institute (MRI), Colombo 8

Objective: To evaluate the patterns of humoral immunodeficiency among Sri Lankan children about whom such data is not available.

100 children with suspected immunodeficiency, who were referred to the MRI by paediatricians from all over the island from 1993 to 1996 were included. Mean age was 3.5 years (SD = 3.7). 70% had more than 4 episodes of lower respiratory tract infections within a period of 6 months and 8% each had either unresolved pneumonia or recurrent diarrhoea. Quantitative estimation of immunoglobulin and complement levels were performed using the radial immunodiffusion technique.

22 children were found to have some immunodeficiency. 18 of them (82%) had deficiency of Ig A alone while 1 each had deficiency of Ig A in combination with either Ig G, Ig G and Ig M, or Ig M. Complement 3 and 4 deficiency was found in one patient. The average age of presentation of Ig G deficiency was 5 months, and isolated Ig A deficiency was 6 months. Both patients with Ig G deficiency had unresolving pneumonia. 10 patients with isolated Ig A deficiency (56%) had recurrent lower respiratory tract infections.

The most frequent deficiency is Ig A which is comparable with data from other countries. Besides improving the standard of care of these children, steps should be taken to set up a surveillance programme, and to maintain a national registry for this hitherto undiagnosed group of diseases in Sri Lanka.

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