Letter to the Editor

Human parechovirus: sepsis-like illness with pulmonary infection

Dear Editor:

Human parechoviruses (HPeV), previously designated as echovirus 22 and 23, belong to the Parechovirus genus within the Picornaviridae family and have been designated HPeV 1 and 2 respectively. The HPeV genome organization and disease spectrum are similar to other viruses in the Picornaviridae family. HPeV have been frequently associated with respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases in children and severe disease in neonates that includes sepsis, meningitis, encephalitis, and hepatitis. In Brazil, HPeV type 8 was first reported in a gastroenteritis outbreak, where 35 stool samples were analyzed and 16.1% were HPeV positive. Highlighting HPeV as etiology of respiratory infection, the authors report the case of a 2-year-old girl with signs and symptoms of sepsis-like illness which progressed to sepsis with pulmonary focus. She was admitted to the pediatric emergency unit in a tertiary care hospital in Southern Brazil, with previous history of rhinorrhea, otitis media and fever for seven days, and dry cough, poor food acceptance and emesis with grunting episodes in the three days prior to admission. Previously, the patient had two hospitalizations for pneumonia at the age of eight and 15 months. The mother reported meningitis outbreak at the patient’s daycare 15 days before, and the child had the vaccination protocol updated. Upon admission, the patient weighed 13 kg, had tachycardia (175 beats/min) and tachypnea (33 breaths/min), was in poor general condition, whining, pale, sleepy, with reduced vesicular murmur, fine crackles and dullness to percussion of left pulmonary lower medium-third. The lung ultrasound showed a small pleural effusion of 0.5 cm thick, with no need of drainage. The patient progressed with respiratory insufficiency, altered consciousness level and septic shock requiring ICU monitoring and mechanical ventilation and her oxygen saturation was 91%. The patient had hemodynamic instability, requiring vasoactive drugs, metabolic acidosis and altered renal function. X-rays showed an acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) pattern (Fig. 1), with bronchopneumonia and pulmonary edema; progressed with decreased urine output and worsening of urea and creatinine levels compared to the admission, which was managed with plasma, albumin and furosemide administration. She had a favorable outcome, and was discharged eight days after the admission. Microbiological investigation was negative for bacteria on blood and respiratory secretion. Respiratory viruses were surveyed in nasopharyngeal aspirates (NPA) using a PCR multiplex method (RV 15, Seegene®, South Korea), which detects respiratory syncytial virus A and B, adenovirus, influenza A and B, parainfluenza 1, 2, 3 and 4, human metapneumovirus, coronavirus OC43 and 229, human rhinovirus A, B and C that resulted negative. By molecular methods a conventional RT-PCR, to the S’NCR as a target, was performed in NPA and detected HPeV, which was confirmed by nucleotide sequence method (Fig. 2). To our knowledge, this is the first report of HPeV circulation in south Brazil. Currently, 16 types of HPeV are recognized and reported mainly in patients under five years old. HPeV have a worldwide distribution and have been reported in many clinical conditions such as gastroenteritis, respiratory infections, neonatal sepsis, various and severe CNS diseases, including...
Each genotype is related to various clinical patterns and by molecular methods HPeV 1 and 3 are the most frequent types involved in many severe infections.² This study shows a case of sepsis with pulmonary focus associated to HPeV infection and should serve as a warning to the introduction of this investigation in the routine care of patients with severe respiratory infection, meningitis, gastroenteritis, or neonatal sepsis, promoting epidemiological and longitudinal analyses seeking to understand the dynamics of this virus circulation and its impact on children’s health.

Authorship

Luíne R.R. Vidal wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Sérgio M. de Almeida assisted the patient and contributed to describe the clinical course. Bárbara M. Cavalli was involved in the development of molecular methods that include the cloning of the positive sample, as well as in the standardization and validation of the molecular methods. Sonia M. Raboni assisted the patient and contributed to describe the clinical course. Meri B. Nogueira was the study’s supervisor.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thanks Dr. William Allan Nix from the Polio and Picornavirus Laboratory Branch, Division of Viral Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, USA for providing the HPeV positive control. Also to Heloisa Giambardino and Luciane Aparecida Pereira for special contributions.

REFERENCES


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Received 17 March 2017
Accepted 11 June 2017
1413-8670/
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http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.bjid.2017.06.004
Available online 7 July 2017

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