Correspondence

Clinical Profile of Pneumonia and Its Association with Rain Wetting in Patients Admitted at a Tertiary Care Institute During Pandemic of Influenza A (H1N1) pdm09 Virus Infection

To the Editor: Sir, the recent report on “pneumonia and its association with rain wetting in patients during pandemic of influenza A (H1N1) pdm09 virus infection” is very interesting. Singh et al noted that “more pneumonia patients are admitted during the periods of greater rainfall and rain-wetting may be an important risk factor for the occurrence of pneumonia.” In fact, the relationship of underlying climatic factor to the occurrence of disease is very interesting. Focusing on influenza A (H1N1) pdm09 virus infection, Storms et al noted that “peak pandemic activity occurred during the fall-winter period.” However, the pattern might be slight different in each setting. In tropical world, there are usually two peaks, in rainy season and winter. The assessment and monitoring of underlying climate can be useful in planning for influenza vaccination in each setting.

Viroj Wiwanitkit
Professor
Wiwanitkit House, Bangkhae
Bangkok Thailand 10160
E-mail: wviroj@yahoo.com

References

The Author’s reply: We are highly thankful to the reader for showing keen interest in our article. Our study highlighted the importance of rain-wetting as a risk factor for occurrence of pneumonia during the pandemic. We agree with the reader and have highlighted in our study that underlying seasonal and other environmental factors may be responsible for pandemic spread of the virus.

We also agree with the reader that epidemic and clinical pattern of the disease may vary according to difference in geographic location. Broor et al in their study, which was done geographically very near to our study area, have also shown that the second wave of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 in 2010 coincided with monsoon season. Similarly, trend of outbreaks of other influenza viruses like H5N1 shows a clear seasonality. Meteorological factors may be important in such outbreaks. The air temperature along with relative humidity is especially important in this regard. Here lies the importance of post pandemic surveilance for respiratory illnesses attributed to viral epidemics in order to better understand the nature of seasonality and other important epidemiological factors.

It has been reported that vaccine coverage is directly linked to hospitalisation rates of high risk groups, especially the elderly people. In India, influenza vaccine with updated antigenic strains of virus is available only during end of a year. Health planners in any country should make this vaccine available according to the first peak seasonal activity of a year. This will help in better overall control of the disease.

Virendra Singh
Professor
Bharat Bhushan Sharma
Associate Professor
Department of Medicine
SMS Medical College Hospital, Jaipur
E-mail: drvirendrasingh@yahoo.com

References