

Neuroinfectious Diseases - Spectrum, Current Scenario and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Infectious diseases that affect the nervous system constitute one sixth of neurological consultation in primary care services worldwide. This study focusses mainly on meningitis and also covers HIV associated neurological conditions and emerging infections. Most of these diseases have a major socioeconomic impact in the healthcare system as well as the family and can cause long term debilitation or high mortality rates in some populations. The discussion covers meningitis, it is the most common causes, clinical presentations, investigations used and treatment regimens used based on the findings. Many challenges are faced during the diagnosis and treatment, including late presentation, time consuming tests, unnecessary brain scans leading to delayed diagnosis. Due to the shift of pathogens causing meningitis from bacterial to viral in the last decade, changes were required in the current strategies of management. Currently, lumbar puncture and CSF analysis is the modality used for diagnosis. Meningitis mortality rates remain as high as 30% in adults, despite technological advancements in the methods of diagnosis and treatment. Continuous improvement in the diagnosis is necessary to reduce the complications, morbidity and mortality in meningitis. Lastly, the discussion will include certain neurological infections that have been emerging in the last 20 years, including West Nile Virus, Ebola, Hantavirus and cryptosporidiosis, requiring a broad-spectrum approach when considering any neurological infection.

Keywords: Neuroinfectious diseases, Meningitis, Challenges

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