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Scrub typhus in adults in a teaching hospital in north Karnataka, 2011-2012

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Abstract

Background and Objectives: Scrub typhus is grossly under-diagnosed in India due to its non specific clinical presentation, limited awareness and low index of suspicion among clinicians, and lack of diagnostic facilities. As there is a resurgence of scrub typhus in this part of north Karnataka, an attempt is made to study the clinical prolife and complications of scrub typhus in adult patients. **Materials and Methods:** All cases of febrile illness diagnosed as scrub typhus over a period of 1 year were analysed. Diagnosis was based on the presence of the eschar and /or positive Weil Felix test with a titre of > 1:80. **Results:** 50 patients diagnosed to have scrub typhus during study period of one year were included in the study. Headache, myalgia, nausea, vomiting and dry cough were common symptoms. More than half of the patients had fever of 7-14 days duration (54%). Eschar was seen only in six patients. Transaminitis was noted in 86.67% patients. Weil Felix test was positive in 48/50 patients with titers of 1:160 in 13 patients, 1:320 in 31 patients and 1:640 in 4 patients. In our study complications noted were acute renal failure (07cases), ARDS and encephalitis 04 cases each and septic shock 01 case. **Conclusion:** There is a resurgence of scrub typhus in this part of north Karnataka, as one of the important cause of acute febrile illness. Weil Felix test serves as a useful and cheap test for the laboratory diagnosis of Rickettsial disease.

Keywords: Eschar, scrub typhus, Weil-Felix test

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