

Etiological spectrum and complications of acute diarrhoeal diseases in adults

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ABSTRACT

Background: Acute diarrhoea is a very common problem, prevalent in all the countries and climates. An estimated 4.6 billion cases of diarrhoea occurred worldwide in 2004, resulting in 2.2 million deaths. It is more common in tropics and endemic in India. Though several studies were done in India and elsewhere on the problem of infantile diarrhoea, adult diarrhoea has not been studied extensively.

Aim: We sought to identify predictor's spectrum and complications of acute diarrhoeal diseases in adults.

Material and methods: Hundred consecutive patients who sought care in a tertiary care teaching hospital with acute diarrhoea were included in the study. Outcome of clinical characteristics and laboratory investigations were reviewed.

Results: In 73% cases, no pathogens could be isolated. Cholera was isolated in 13% of cases, 12% being eltor and 1% classical biotype. The commonest complications observed were hypovolemic shock (11%) and acute renal failure (ARF) (8%). More than 50% of hypovolemic shock patients had ARF. Cholera was associated with more complications. The overall mortality was 2%; both had cerebrovascular accident (CVA).

Conclusions: The present study highlights the overall role of pathogens as causes of acute diarrhoea in adults in northern parts of Karnataka. Several interesting clinical observations, relating to the pathogens identified, have been reported. Further research is required to determine the frequency of specific organisms during each season.

Keywords: acute diarrhoea; cholera; acute renal failure, hypovolemic shock