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CRYPTOCOCCOSIS IN AIDS PATIENTS IN RIO DE JANEIRO - BRAZIL

Galhardo, Maria Clara G., Lazéra, M., Veloso, V.G., Rolla, V.C., Friedman, R.K, Cuzzi-Maia, T, Wanke, B. Hospital Evandro Chagas/IOC/FIOCRUZ.

Introduction: The prevalence of cryptococcosis in the general population in Brazil is unknown. Data from the National AIDS program shows a frequency of 4.3% in AIDS patients at the time of AIDS case reporting to the Ministry of Health.

Objective: To determine the frequency of cryptococcosis in a cohort of HIV infected patients at Evandro Chagas Hospital/IOC/FIOCRUZ (HEC), an AIDS reference hospital in Rio de Janeiro.

Methods: A retrospective study reviewing charts of HIV infected patients followed at HEC between 1987 and 1994. Mycology and anatomical pathology records were also reviewed. A cryptococcosis case was defined by demonstration of cryptococcus by direct microscopy, culture, or histopathology in any site.

Results: A total of 988 charts of HIV infected patients were reviewed, 363 were classified as AIDS cases. Cryptococcosis was diagnosed in 44 (12.1%) of the AIDS cases and was the presenting manifestation of AIDS in 7/44 (16%). The diagnosis was obtained by culture in 36 (82%), histopathology in 1 (2%), and by autopsy in 7 (16%). Clinical presentation was non-specific: fever (72%), neurologic (56%), and respiratory manifestations (28%).

Conclusions: Cryptococcosis in our hospital (12.1%) is more frequent than in European countries and U.S.A, but is less frequent than in African countries. These differences observed with the data from AIDS Program may be attributed to at least two factors: 1- AIDS Program data reflect information received by the time AIDS cases are reported whereas we follow patients for the duration of their illness, long after the diagnosis of AIDS 2- As a reference hospital, in a research institution, we have better clinical training and laboratory capacity to make the diagnosis of cryptococcosis than the majority of Brazilian hospitals.

Maria Clara G. Galhardo Fax: 55 21 590 9988 Rua Alzira Cortes, 5/308- Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. CEP 22260-050 Fax: 55 21 590 9988