PNEUMOCYSTIS CARINII (JIROVECII) PNEUMONIA (PCP): THE MOST COMMON OPPORTUNISTIC INFECTION OBSERVED IN HIV/AIDS CASES AT THE UNIVERSITY MALAYA MEDICAL CENTRE, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

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Abstract. This retrospective study was conducted among 59 HIV/AIDS patients with opportunistic infections admitted to the University Malaya Medical Centre between 2000 and 2009. Fifty-five point nine percent of cases were Chinese, 25.4% were Malays, 11.8% were Indians and 6.7% were of unknown ethnic origin. The male:female ratio was 2.9:1 (44 males and 15 females). The highest prevalence (38.9%) occurred in the 30-39 year old age group. Men comprised 47.7% and women 53.3%; the majority of both were married. The majority of cases were Malaysians (89.8%) and the rest (10.2%) were immigrants. Most of the patients (18.6%) were non-labourers, followed by labourers (11.9%), the unemployed (5.1%) and housewives (3.4%). The most common risk factor was unprotected sexual activity (20.3%). The two most common HIV/AIDS related opportunistic infections were Pneumocystis carinii (jirovecii) pneumonia (PCP) (62.7%) and toxoplasmosis (28.8%). Seventy-two point nine percent of patients had a CD4 count <200 cells/μl and 5.1% had a CD4 count >500 cells/μl. Eleven point nine percent of cases died during study period. A low CD4 count had a greater association with opportunistic infections. Most of the patients presented with fever (44.1%), cough (42.4%) and shortness of breath (28.8%). Detection of the etiologic pathogens aids clinicians in choosing appropriate management strategies.

Keywords: Pneumocystis jirovecii, HIV/AIDS patients, opportunistic infection, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a disease of the human immune system caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). AIDS is a pandemic (Anthony et al, 1998). In 2007, UNAIDS estimated 33 million people worldwide had AIDS. AIDS has killed approximately 2 million people, including 330,000 children; 76% of the deaths occurred in sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, WHO, 2007).

The clinical signs and symptoms of AIDS occur as a result of conditions that do not normally develop in persons with normal immune systems. Opportunistic infections are common in people with AIDS (Anthony et al, 1998).