PREVALENCE OF METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA) IN COMMUNITY-ACQUIRED PRIMARY PYODERMA

Mariam K. Ali
Medical Microbiology, the Status of Laboratory Animals, College of Medicine, University of Baghdad, Iraq.

Abstract

Background: Although prevalence of MRSA strains is reported to be increasing, there are no studies of their prevalence in community-acquired primary pyodermas in Iraq.

Aims: This study aimed at determining the prevalence of MRSA infection in community-acquired primary pyodermas.

Methods: prospective survey carried out in Dermatology Department of Baghdad Teaching Hospital in Baghdad.

Materials and Methods: Eighty-six patients with primary pyoderma, visiting the dermatology outpatient, were studied clinically and microbiologically. Sensitivity testing was done for vancomycin, sisomycin, gentamicin, framycetin, erythromycin, methicillin, cefazolin, cefuroxime, penicillin G and ciprofloxacin.

Results: The culture positivity rate was 83.7%. Staphylococcus aureus was isolated in all cases except two. Barring one, all strains of Staphylococcus aureus were sensitive to methicillin.

Conclusions: Methicillin resistance is uncommon in community-acquired primary pyodermas in Baghdad. Treatment with antibacterial active against MRSA is probably unwarranted for community-acquired primary pyodermas.

Keywords: Community-acquired primary pyoderma, Methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus.

Introduction

Staphylococcus aureus and Streptococcus pyogenes are the common causative agents of cutaneous bacterial infections, [1]. Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), once considered primarily as a nosocomial pathogen, is being increasingly reported as a colonizer in healthy individuals without risk factors and even in community-acquired infections including pyodermas, [2], [3]. The implications of these reports for the current prescription practices for cutaneous bacterial infections are obvious. It is therefore essential to determine the susceptibility pattern of clinical isolates of S. aureus in different communities across our diverse country. The present study was undertaken to determine the prevalence of MRSA in community-acquired primary pyodermas in outpatients visiting an care hospital.

Method

This open prospective survey was carried out in a Dermatology Department of Baghdad Teaching Hospital. Eighty-six consecutive patients with primary pyoderma visiting the Dermatology outpatient between February and July 2008 were included. Patients with cellulites, erysipelas, secondary pyodermas or those receiving local or systemic antibiotic therapy and those with a history of hospitalization within the last year were excluded. Sterile swabs were used for aseptically collecting the exudates or pus from the lesions. They were then processed as per the standard protocol for the isolation of aerobic bacteria, [4]. The specimens were inoculated on 5% sheep blood agar; MacConkey's agar; and manitol salt agar, which was used as a selective medium for Staphylococcus aureus. S. aureus was identified based on Gram's stain morphology, colony characteristics and positive catalase and coagulate tests. Antimicrobial susceptibility test was performed by the Kirby Bauer Disc Diffusion method as per National Committee for Clinical Laboratory Standards (NCCLS) guidelines, [5]. The antimicrobials tested included penicillin G [10 units], erythromycin [15 mg], vancomycin [30 mg], sisomycin [10 mg], gentamicin [10 mg], framycetin [100 mg], ciprofloxacin [5 mg], cefazolin [30 mg] and cefuroxime [30 mg]. S.
*S. aureus* ATCC 25923 was used as a control. Methicillin resistance was detected by using 1mg oxacillin discs.

**Results**

Eighty-six patients (54 males and 32 females) with community-acquired primary pyodermas were enrolled. Their ages ranged from 5 to 80 years (mean age = 36.1 years, median age = 38.5 years). Folliculitis [Table (1)] was the predominant primary pyoderma (58.8%), followed by furunculosis(33.3%). Of the 86 swabs cultured aerobically, growth was obtained in 72, with a culture positivity rate of 83.7%. Only one organism was isolated from any sample. *S. aureus* was the predominant pathogen, being isolated from 70 patients (81.4%). The remaining two isolates were *S. pyogenes*. All the strains of *S. aureus*. [Table (2)] were sensitive to vancomycin and sisomycin. The sensitivity to other antibiotics varied. Only one of the seventy strains of *S. aurous* was methicillin resistant.

### Table 1: Distribution of primary pyodermas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of lesion</th>
<th>Number of patients</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folliculitis</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furuncle</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impetigo</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecthyma</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periopititis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2: Antibiotic susceptibility pattern of *S. aureus*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antibiotic tested</th>
<th>Number of sensitive strains (n = 70)</th>
<th>Percentage of resistant strains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vancomycin</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisomicin</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methicillin</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentamicin</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cefazolin</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cefuroxime</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciprofloxacin</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flamyacin</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erythromycin</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penicillin G</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

The present study was undertaken to determine the prevalence of MRSA in community-acquired primary pyodermas. Folliculitis and furunculosis were the commonest primary pyodermas, seen in 58.8% and 33.3% of cases respectively. These have also been reported to be the most frequent primary pyodermas in some other studies, [6], [7] while in one study in children, impetigo was the commonest lesion, [8], [15]. The majority of our patients were adults, which could account for the high frequency of folliculitis and furunculosis. All samples in our study yielded monomicrobial flora, with *Staphylococcus. aureus* isolated from 81.4% of patients and *Strepto. Pyogenes* from 2.3%. Cultures were negative in 16.3% of the patients. Baslas et al. also reported negative cultures in 14.9% of patients.[7] *S. aureus* is the predominant pathogen reported in other studies as well, [3], [6], [7], [8], [9], [10] including cases of secondary pyodermas. However, since Gram negative bacilli also account for secondary pyodermas, *S. aureus* is relatively less frequently associated with secondary pyodermas than with primary pyodermas, [7], [10], [16]. Other studies have
reported polymicrobial flora ranging from 5-16%; [8], [9], [17] this is not surprising since only patients with primary bacterial infections were selected for our study. In another study, *Strepto. Pyogenes* accounted for 26.98% of the total isolates, [11], [18]. Many reports from Asia have highlighted the prevalence of MRSA in the community as well as in community-acquired pyodermas, [2], [3], [10], [12]. In a series on community-acquired pyodermas from Mangalore, Nagaraju et al. reported that 11.8% of strains of 202 *S. aureus* strains were methicillin resistant, [3], [19].

According to the reported there is an increase in the occurrence of methicillin-resistant strains of *S. aureus* from 9.83% in 1992 to 45.44% in 1998, [13], [20]. Thus, it is likely that the prevalence of methicillin resistance in community-acquired *S. aureus* strains also varies in different regions. In our study, only one of the seventy strains of *S. aureus* (1.4%) was methicillin resistant. This low prevalence was probably because our study included only community-acquired primary pyodermas as against the earlier retrospective study where samples from hospitalized and OUT Patient Dermatology patients were received from all type of infection. In our series, the sensitivity of *S. aureus* strains to other antibiotics varied. All the strains were sensitive to vancomycin and sisomycin. They showed minimal resistance to first generation cephalosporins and gentamicin (1.4%). Resistance was greatest to penicillin (87.2%), followed by that to erythromycin (42.9%) and framycetin (35.7%), an antimicrobial used for topical application. Resistance to ciprofloxacin was 17.2%. In other studies too, an increasing resistance to erythromycin is being observed, [3], [13], [14]. The emergence of antibiotic resistant strains poses a significant problem both in community as well as hospital practice in deciding empiric therapy. It is therefore important to monitor the changing trends in bacterial infections and their antimicrobial susceptibility patterns, [12]. Studies like the present one help in establishing the etiological agents and deciding empiric therapy from time to time. The increasing resistance observed to framycetin and erythromycin limits their use as first choice antimicrobial agents. In patients with primary pyodermas, cephalosporin and penicillinase resistant penicillins (e.g., methicillin, cloxacillin) can be considered as preferred first line systemic therapeutic agents, [14]. Similarly, the first choices of topical therapy for primary pyodermas are probably gentamicin and sisomicin rather than framycetin. However, we have not been able to check the sensitivity of these isolates to some other popular topical antibacterials like sodium fusidate, mupirocin and nadifloxacin as our study was focused on the frequency of MRSA strains, [12]. In spite of this drawback, our findings indicate that it may probably be unnecessary to use antibacterials useful for MRSA strains on a routine basis for the empirical treatment of community-acquired primary pyodermas. However, these findings need to be confirmed by a larger Study.

References


الخلاصة
على الرغم من انتشار جرثومة الساطولوكس
أوريس لكن لا توجد دراسات كثيرة عن مدى انتشارها في
المجتمع وخاصة في العراق الأهداف: هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى تحديد مدى انتشار المرض (الممـتانـد) أبـدـايأـت
والطرق: دراسة استقصائية أجريت على مئة وثمانون من
المرضى المحتمل إصابتهم في مرض الابدائي تقييم الجلد
في مستشفى بغداد التعليمي (فرع الجلدية) وتتم الدراسة
سريريا ومجهريا وقد تم اختبار الحساسية للـVANCOMYCIN, SISOMYCIN, GENTMYCIN,
FRAMYCIN ERYTHROMYCIN, METHICILLIN,
CEFAZOLIN, CEFUROXIME, PENICILLIN G,
النتائج: كان معدل النتائج الإيجابية CIPROFLOXACIN
حوالي 78.3%، الفكتورات المنقودية الذئبية كانت
موزولة في جميع الحالات ماعدا اثنين وجميع سلالات هذه
البيكتريا كانت حساسة للميثاسيلين. الاستنتاجات: الميثاسيلين
المقاوم هو غير شائع في مرضى المكتسبة الابدائي (تقييم
الجلد) في بغداد والعلاج المضادة للبكتريا نشطة ضد هذه
الجرثومة.