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TITLE: The clinical profile and outcome of children with Dengue encephalitis at the Philippine Children's Medical Center: A retrospective study from January 2011-June 2017

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Dengue, a mosquito-borne flavivirus, is hyperendemic in the Philippines. One of its rare complications is dengue encephalitis, characterized by altered sensorium, elevated liver enzymes, and high dengue-specific antibody titers. Previously known as non-neurotropic, dengue presents with an increasing incidence of neurologic manifestations.

OBJECTIVE: To describe the clinico-demographic profile and outcome of laboratory-confirmed dengue encephalitis patients.

METHODS: This is a retrospective study that used purposive sampling to describe laboratory-confirmed dengue encephalitis cases aged 0-18 years. The clinico-demographic profiles and outcomes were collected using chart review, and variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS: 14 laboratory-confirmed cases were reviewed. Most (57%) were males aged 3 days-15 years. Fever lasted 3-11 days. Following nonspecific signs and symptoms, neurological manifestations developed within 1-5 days, the most common being seizures (71%). Majority (57%) had anemia. All, except one, exhibited leukopenia and thrombocytopenia. Elevated liver enzymes, bleeding parameter derangements, electrolyte, and glucose imbalances were noted. All were seropositive for dengue IgM, and 5 dengue IgM in the CSF. Most common EEG findings showed generalized slowing. Neuroimaging reports were normal in some or showed cerebral edema in the others. Half of the patients recovered fully, 3 showing partial recovery from neurologic changes, and 3 others had neurologic sequelae. One infant expired.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Dengue encephalitis should be considered in patients living in an endemic country, presenting with fever with neurologic changes or elevated liver enzymes, with a risk for developing neurologic sequelae or death.

BIOGRAPHY

Kristine Alvarado-Dela Cruz is a Pediatric Infectious Disease specialist, academician, and researcher. She is presently the Head of the Microbiology Department of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), which houses five National Reference Laboratories for Infectious and Tropical Diseases in the country. With more than 13 years' experience in clinical trials and research for vaccines and infectious diseases, she is presently leading several local, Nationwide, and ASEAN-wide studies focusing on emerging and re-emerging pathogens and vaccine-preventable diseases. Dr. Dela Cruz has reviewed several articles on immunology for a reputable scientific journal and serves in the academe of the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health as an associate faculty member. She holds her clinical practice at RITM, The Medical City Clinics, and Cardinal Santos Medical Center.

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