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Predictors of MERS-CoV infection: A large case-control study of patients presenting with ILI at a MERS-CoV referral hospital in Saudi Arabia

Background: A case-control study to better characterize the clinical features, laboratory and radiological abnormalities associated with MERS-CoV infection in order to help with early identification of this syndrome from other respiratory infections.

Methods: Eighty patients admitted to a hospital in Riyadh, diagnosed with MERS-CoV infection based on RT-PCR were matched on age, sex and the presence of a co-morbid condition on a basis of 1:2 to other patients admitted with respiratory symptoms and tested negative for MERS-CoV on RT-PCR.

Results: None of the reported MERS-CoV presenting symptoms was significantly associated with being infected with MERS-CoV. On the other hand, the WBC count was significantly lower in patients with confirmed MERS-CoV infection (median 5.7 vs 9.3, P: 0.0004). Neutrophil count was as well significantly lower in MERS-CoV patients (median 3.7 vs 6.7, P: 0.0001). Both AST and ALT values were significantly higher in MERS-CoV infected group (AST median 42 vs 36, P: 0.03 and ALT median 33 vs 28, P: 0.003). Overall our MERS-CoV mortality rate was (10%) below the national figure of (40%).

Conclusions: None of the presenting symptoms are specific for MERS-CoV infection and out of all the investigations WBC, neutrophil counts, AST and ALT values have some predictive utility.

Biography

Sameeh Ghazal, after graduating from medical college in 1982, he has worked as a medical doctor in the Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia, initially as a General Practitioner then as a Pediatric Resident. He was then promoted as a Consultant in Pediatric Infectious Diseases and Infection Control. Because of his interest in clinical research, he obtained the certification in Health Care Epidemiology, Research and Biostatistics. With over 35 years of working in the medical field, he has gained a wide range of experience in General Pediatrics, Pediatric Infectious Diseases, Infection Control, Healthcare Epidemiology, Clinical Research, Hospital Accreditation, Hospital Administration and Quality. He also teaches and supervises undergraduate and postgraduate medical students.

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