Influenza A/H1/N1/09 infection in cirrhosis

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Published online: 28 May 2014
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Sir,

The recent report on influenza A/H1/N1/09 infection in cirrhosis is very interesting [1]. Bal et al. reported that “A high index of suspicion is needed for influenza infection among patients with decompensated cirrhosis” [1]. The interesting question is whether influenza A/H1/N1/09 infection has any effect on the liver. The observation of poor outcome in the study by Bal et al. might be due to many reasons. The delayed diagnosis due to atypical presentation and lack of appreciation of the new influenza by the physicians in charge are likely to be the causes of high mortality. Whether there is a problem relating to standards of treatment in the reported setting is questionable. The delayed use of antiviral drugs (the patients did not get drugs before being admitted for intensive care) might be problematic in relation to the emerging influenza problem. In fact, in the setting with good preparation, the results can be significantly better. Marzano et al. reported that

“A/H1N1/09 infection rate in hospitalized patients with and without cirrhosis was not significantly different” [2]. Marzano et al. also noted that there was no fatal case among the cirrhosis patients with influenza in their setting [2], and this is significantly different from the present report by Bal et al. that all patients died.

References

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