

Severe acute respiratory syndrome in Taiwan: analysis of epidemiological characteristics in 29 cases.

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摘要

Abstract

OBJECTIVES: To describe the clinical characteristics and outcomes of patients with severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). **METHODS:** Between March 28 and June 30 '2003, 29 patients with probable SARS seen at Shin Kong Wu Ho-Su Memorial Hospital, Taipei, were analysed. **RESULTS:** Presenting symptoms included fever (100%), cough (69.0%), chills or rigor (62.1%), and shortness of breath (41.4%). Mean days to defervescence were 6.8+/-2.9 days, but fever recurred in 15 patients (51.7%) at 10.9+/-3.4 days. Common laboratory features included lymphopenia (72.4%), thrombocytopenia (34.5%) and elevated C-reactive protein (CRP), lactate dehydrogenase (LDH), and aspartate aminotransferase (AST) (93.1, 62.1, 44.8%, respectively). All patients except one had initial abnormal chest radiographs and 20 (69.0%) had radiological worsening at 7.5+/-2.6 days. Nine patients (31.0%) subsequently required mechanical ventilation with four deaths (13.8%). Most patients with clinical deterioration responded to pulse corticosteroid therapy (14 out of 17) but six complicated with nosocomial infections. The risk factors associated with severe disease were presence of diarrhoea, high peak LDH and CRP, high AST and creatine kinase on admission and high peak values. **CONCLUSIONS:** Prudent corticosteroid use, vigilant microbiological surveillance and appropriate antibiotics coverage are the key to successful treatment.