



THE CEYLON MEDICAL JOURNAL

Established 1887

Volume 63 Supplement 1, July 2018

Sri Lanka Medical Association

131st Anniversary International Medical Congress

Abstracts

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Conclusion: It was found that *Aspergillus niger* is the main causative agent of black moulds in onions, and they could be completely eliminated by boiling in water. This study highlights the presence of a fungus capable of producing opportunistic infections and mycotoxicosis, in people who consume infected onions daily. Therefore measures should be taken by the responsible authorities to control the growth and transmission of fungi during storage and handling of onions.

PP095

Association of leptospiraemia and disease severity in leptospirosis

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Introduction and Objectives: Leptospirosis is an emerging zoonosis of public health importance in Sri Lanka. The clinical presentation may range from mild to severe forms resulting in organ failure and death. Severity of leptospirosis is multifactorial, strain type and leptospiraemia suggested as important microbial factors. This study aimed to determine the correlation between leptospiraemia and disease severity.

Methods: Whole blood was subjected to DNA extraction from a total of 40 leptospirosis confirmed patients and quantitative real time PCR targeting *secY* gene of pathogenic *Leptospira* was done using EvaGreen® chemistry. Standard curve was generated to quantify *Leptospira* load in blood and was compared with outcome.

Results: Majority of the patients were male (85%) with a median age of 49 years (IQR:40-60, range:18-73). The median duration of illness on admission was 5 days (IQR: 4-6 days, range: 2-14 days). The bacterial load on admission ranged between 1.2—102 to 1.3—106 with a median of 2,942 *Leptospira*/mL (IQR 959 - 8,164). Median (IQR) leptospiral load for hepatic, renal, pulmonary and haematological involvement were 5,612 (1,744-12,350), 5,681(1,744-9,003), 10,870 (5,918-387,490) and 3,382 (958-8,879) *Leptospira*/mL respectively. Among the patients (range: *Leptospira*/mL), 10 had acute kidney injury (208-634,916), 6 had acute liver failure (158-10,870), 7 had pulmonary hemorrhage (158-634,917) and 1 had myocarditis (121). Eight patients needed ICU treatment (158-140,063) and 3 deaths (6,155-140,063) were reported. No significant association was observed with leptospiraemia and disease severity ($P=0.267$). Further leptospiraemia had no association between days of fever on admission ($P=0.776$), age ($P=0.419$) and gender ($P=0.790$).

Conclusion: There was no significant association between leptospiraemia and the outcome of infection in this study population.

PP096

Knowledge of infection control and prevention practices among healthcare workers in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka

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Introduction and Objectives: Knowledge of infection control among healthcare workers is one of major factors which determines the effectiveness of infection control programmes. Effective infection control practices reduce the risk of transmission of healthcare associated infections and decrease the cost of healthcare systems. In this study we have assessed the knowledge of infection control and prevention practices among healthcare workers in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka.