

A RARE INVADER CAUSING RESPIRATORY DISTRESS & SEPSIS : THE COMMUNITY PAEDIATRICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

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The case: An 8 year old male presented with fever , respiratory distress and thrombocytopenia to the casualty at a secondary care centre. He was referred to tertiary care with the possibility of ARDS due to H1N1 or dengue fever, but succumbed next morning at the tertiary centre. The culture came positive for *Burkholderia pseudomallei* – causative agent of Melioidosis. **The pathogen:** Reported worldwide, gram negative bacteria dwelling in soil < 10 cm deep , resurfaces during rains. Spreads by ingestion, inoculation or inhalation, incubation period is 9 days and infects human ,cattle and swine. **Clinical features :** Majority have localized skin infections but others present as sepsis and pneumonia. 5–10% occur in < 15 years ²,case fatality rate is 10–50%¹. **Diagnosis:** Culture resembles pseudomonas colonies. Microscopy, ELISA, PCR can be done. **Treatment :** Intensive phase (10 to 14 days) & eradication phase (12 weeks) with Ceftazidime. Resistant to penicillin, gentamicin and macrolides.³ **Community activities:** Informed District Surveillance Officer, Visited the site forming a team consisting of Microbiologist, Community Medical Officer and field staff. No history of unusual contact with soil, travel or similar illness in the family. No abscesses or skin manifestations for contacts, no history suggestive of immunosuppression, no significant past history. There were compound walls made from mud. It was raining the previous days. From the place of bathing and where the child used to play - two soil samples and two water samples were collected for culture testing. **Discussion & conclusions:** This child probably got an airborne infection leading to pneumonia but we could not establish a direct source and the reports were negative. Similar cases have been reported, but exposure to deep soil could be established only in a few cases ¹. In 80% of children, there are no known risk factors. **Prevention and control:** No further cases reported, sanitary measures and surveillance is continuing,