

ABSTRACT

Twenty two patients with eosinophilic meningoencephalitis presumably due to Angiostrongylus cantonensis were studied prospectively in the Bangkok Hospital for Tropical Disease during October 1982 to February 1983. Thirty-three available medical records dated from 1961 to 1982 were also analysed.

The patients were classified into two groups according to the degree of clinical manifestations. There were twelve severe cases in each of the prospective and retrospective studies. Headache was the most frequent presenting symptom. The incubation period in the severe cases was significantly shorter than in the mild cases with the medians of 3 days and 9 days respectively. There was no difference in the initial peripheral leucocyte and eosinophil count and the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) findings between the two groups. The peak of leucocyte and eosinophil count in the CSF of severe cases was associated with the peak severity of the clinical symptoms and signs, and as well as the opening pressure and the protein level were statistically higher than in the mild cases. The total cell count and eosinophil count in the CSF of both group reached their peaks in the fourth week after infection. There was a direct correlation between the leucocyte counts, the eosiniphil counts and the percentage of eosinophil in the CSF.

The duration of illness in the mild cases ranged from 8 to 48 days with a median of 30 days while in the severe cases it ranged from 23 days up to more than 150 days with a median of 54 days. There was already one death in this study. The suspected cause of death was septicemia. The CSF pleocytosis tended to persist longer than the clinical symptoms.

Corticosteroid seemed to have no effect on eosinophil count of the CSF. No evidence of clinical improvement by the corticosteroid treatment was observed in this study.

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