

European Respiratory Society Annual Congress 2012

Abstract Number: 1300

Publication Number: P4120

Abstract Group: 7.4. Paediatric Respiratory Infection and Immunology

Keyword 1: Infants **Keyword 2:** Infections **Keyword 3:** Viruses

Title: Clinical characteristics of pediatric patients affected with human metapneumovirus who needed hospital admittance in the western region of Guatemala

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Body: Introduction: Human Metapneumovirus (hMPV) was described for the first time on 2001 by van den Hoogen et al. as a cause of bronchiolitis in children, although a world spread pathogen, very little is known about its epidemiological behavior in latinamerican countries. Aim: To review the clinical characteristics of children who needed admission to our hospital due to a respiratory infection caused by hMPV. Methods: We included in this review all pediatric patients admitted during 2010 & 2011 suffering from a viral respiratory tract infection, and had a polymerase chain reaction positive to hMPV in a nasopharyngeal aspirate, sent to the CDC in the US, for its accurate classification. Results: We reviewed 102 clinical files. 56 were female, mean age 16 months. Three symptoms were predominant in these patients: fever (n=89), cough (n=86) and respiratory distress (n=57). An alveolar radiological pattern on chest X rays was seen in 57% of the cases. White blood cell counts were normal although a discrete neutrophilia was observed in most cases. C reactive protein mean value 27 mg.dl. None required mechanical ventilation. Mean time hospitalization was 7.4 days. There was no mortality reported in all cases. During the year 2011, no hMPV infection was recorded, despite an intensive epidemiological surveillance. Conclusions: hMPV is still an important cause of respiratory infection in children. Even though, during this review the mortality rate was null. It called our attention the bi anual pattern of appearance of this virus, because we did not record any hMPV case on 2011, but in this 2012 we are seeing a new increase in hMPV cases in our region.