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Benign Thyroid Disease And Dietary Factors In Thyroid Cancer: A Case-Control Study In Kuwait

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We conducted a population-based study of 313 case - control pairs in Kuwait to examine the aetiology of thyroid cancer, the second most common neoplasm among women in this and several other countries in the Gulf region. Among the demographic variables, individuals with 12+ years of education had a significantly reduced risk of thyroid cancer (OR=0.6; 95% CI: 0.3 - 0.9). The average age at diagnosis (+s.d.) of thyroid cancer was 34.7+11 years in women and 39+13.4 years in men. History of thyroid nodule was reported only by cases (n=34; 10.9%; lower 95% CI: 12.0); and goitre by 21 cases and four controls (OR=5.3; 95% CI: 1.8 - 15.3). There was no significant increase in risk with history of hypothyroidism (OR=1.8) or hyperthyroidism (OR=1.7). For any benign thyroid disease, the OR was 6.4 (95% CI: 3.4 - 12.0); and the population attributable risk was about 26% (95% CI: 21.1 - 30.9). Stepwise regression analysis showed that high consumption of processed fish products (OR=2.2; 95% CI: 1.6 - 3.0), fresh fish (OR=0.5; 95% CI: 0.4 - 0.7) and chicken (OR=1.7; 95% CI: 1.2 - 2.3) were independently associated with thyroid cancer, with significant dose-response relationships. Among the thyroid cancer patients who reported high consumption of fish products, a large majority also reported high consumption of fresh fish (98%) and shellfish (68%). No clear association emerged with consumption of cruciferous vegetables. These data support the hypothesis that hyperplastic thyroid disease is strongly related to thyroid cancer; and that habitual high consumption of various seafoods may be relevant to the aetiology of thyroid cancer. The association with chicken consumption requires further study.

KEYWORDS: benign thyroid disease; dietary factors; thyroid cancer; aetiology; case - control study; Kuwait

The Epidemiology Of Group B Streptococcal Colonization Among Obstetrical And Newborn Populations In Kuwait

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ABSTRACT

Background: GBS (streptococcus agalactiae) is known to be a major cause of bacterial sepsis among newborn infants, which can account for approximately 10-30% of all the neonatal infections in some centers. The source of infection in the neonate is the colonized maternal birth canal. Transmission occurs before or during the birth process. Estimated GBS colonization

among pregnant women ranges from 10-30%. GBS is transmitted to 40-70% of babies of colonized mothers, however only 1-2% of those infants develop disease. In Kuwait, maternal GBS colonization and neonatal sepsis risks have not been reported and firm preventive guidelines have not been established.

Objective: To estimate the magnitude of group B streptococcal colonization among both obstetrical and neonatal population in Kuwait and to define factors influencing vertical transmission of and neonatal colonization with GBS.

Methods: A prospective study of 1123 women were evaluated for GBS colonization at admission for delivery in Maternity hospital between July 2000 and January 2001. Combined low vaginal-anorectal swabs were obtained for GBS culture. Midstream urine samples were sent for GBS Antigen identification. Ear and skin swabs were taken for GBS culture from their infants immediately after birth.

Results: Colonization was detected in 14.2% of 1123 mothers (low vaginal- anorectal swab) and increased to 17.4% when combined with positive urine for GBS Antigen. Colonization rate was the same in Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis. GBS colonization in the mothers was only affected by gravidity more than two. GBS Colonization in infants was found in 49.7% of the total colonized mothers. Prolonged rupture of the membranes (PROM) was the only significant factor associated with colonization in infants.

Conclusion: GBS colonization rate in our population is comparable to that identified in other countries. If the colonized infants are identified and followed up to see how many of them are infected, a preventive strategy can be formulated and implemented in Kuwait.

Violence Against Nurses in Healthcare Facilities in Kuwait

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A national cross-sectional survey was conducted to document the prevalence and determinants of violence against nurses in healthcare facilities in Kuwait. It involved all nurses employed in all types of health-related facilities and available in the country in May 1999. The questionnaire was completed by 5876 nurses (85% females, 88% non-Kuwaitis). Verbal violence had been experienced in the 6 previous months by 48% of the group, and physical violence by 7%. There was no physical harm reported in 63% of cases of physical violence. Physical abusers were mostly patients (51%). Compared to nurses who had never experienced physical violence, those who had experienced some were more likely to be male, non-Kuwaiti, to have had a shorter professional experience, and to be working in a hospital rather than in a primary healthcare center. The experience of nurses with violence is still relatively rare in Kuwait. Communication with patients and their entourage of family members and/or close friends is needed to clarify expectations and to avoid frustration and angry verbal outbursts.

Hantavirus-Specific Antibodies in Rodents and Humans Living in Kuwait

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Hantaviruses are found in widely scattered areas of the world and are transmitted by inhalation of virus-contaminated aerosols of rodent excreta. The present study was undertaken in Kuwait to

investigate the serological evidence for hantavirus infection in rodents and humans. Sera were collected from 283 wild rodents and 183 human subjects (46 Kuwaitis and 137 non-Kuwaitis). The rodent sera were investigated for the presence of antibodies against the Seoul and Puumala strains of the hantaviruses by enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay and immunofluorescence technique using the virus-infected Vero E6 cells. The findings showed the presence of anti-hantavirus antibodies in seven out of the 283 (2.8%) rodents. Antibodies against the Seoul strain were present in six (2.1%) and against the Puumala strain in three (1%) rodents. Further, it was observed that three out of 84 (3.6%) of the *Rattus norvegicus* and four out of 174 (2.3%) *Mus musculus* had anti-hantavirus antibodies. Two rodents belonging to species *Mus musculus* had antibodies against both strains of the hantaviruses. Out of 183 human sera, 13 (7%) were positive for hantavirus antibodies. Among the Kuwaitis 5/46 (11%) and among the non-Kuwaitis 8/137 (6%) were positive for the hantavirus antibodies. Antibodies to both Puumala and Hantaan strains were detected in Kuwaitis as well as in non-Kuwaitis. Although no human case of hantavirus illness has yet been reported in Kuwait, the serological evidence of infection suggests a constant vigil.

Percutaneous Testicular Sperm Aspiration and Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection in Obstructive and Non-Obstructive Azoospermia: An Easy Alternative to TESE and MESA

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Objective: To evaluate the recovery rate of sperm from the testis using percutaneous testicular aspiration with a 22-gauge hypodermic needle followed by evaluation of the fertilization rate and pregnancy rate after intracytoplasmic sperm injection.

Materials And Methods: This is a prospective observational study performed in a private in vitro fertilization setting in Kuwait. Fifteen patients with obstructive and non-obstructive azoospermia were included in the study. Thirteen of them had previous microepididymal sperm aspiration, percutaneous epididymal sperm aspiration or testicular sperm extraction. The sperm were retrieved using percutaneous testicular aspiration under local analgesia. This was followed by intracytoplasmic sperm injection. A total of 146 eggs were collected and 112 were injected.

Results: Normal fertilization occurred in 91 oocytes (87.5%) and the total number of embryos cleaved was 83 (91%). Embryo transfer was performed in 13 with pregnancy rate of 33.3 per treatment cycle and 38.5 per embryo transfer. Failure to retrieve sperm was encountered in 2 cases both in the hypospermatogenesis group.

Conclusions: Percutaneous testicular sperm aspiration using hypodermic needles under local analgesic is an easy and cheap method with high patient acceptability, minimal complications and no need of special training. In this small group, it seems to have an acceptable success rate in terms of sperm retrieval and pregnancy in the obstructive type as well as hypospermatogenesis, but to lesser extent.