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ACUTE HEMORRHAGIC CONJUNCTIVITIS

Etiology, Epidemiology and Clinical Manifestations

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Acute Hemorrhagic Conjunctivitis in Brazil

II. AHC Caused by CA24v in North Brazil-1987

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Between January and March 1987 there were outbreaks of acute hemorrhagic conjunctivitis (AHC) among the inhabitants of the cities of Belém and Manaus. Both cities are located in the Amazonian region of north Brazil.

A total of 84 patients from Belém was attended at the Instituto Evandro Chagas (IEC); all had conjunctivitis that was typical of a foreign body sensation with a watery discharge, ocular pain, and edema of the eyelids. Subconjunctival hemorrhage was observed in about 20% of these same patients. Another 33 patients who lived in Manaus had similar symptoms and were also examined by the IEC.

Swabs were taken from the eyes and throat of each patient and serum was collected during the acute and convalescent phase of the disease.

Unidentified enteroviruses were isolated in HEp-2 cells from the swabs of 39 patients from Belém and 16 from Manaus. This virus could not be neutralized with by Melnick's pools or with EV70 homologous antiserum.

Four of the above virus samples and paired serum from 30 patients from Belém were sent to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC),¹⁾ Atlanta, Georgia (U.S.A.), for identification and specific neutralization tests. The 4 isolates were all identified as Coxsackievirus A24 variant (CA24v) and 50% of the paired serum samples showed conversions for this virus. Isolates from the Belém outbreak were studied in Belém using the strains identified by the CDC as standards and all proved to be CA24v. (A total of 57.1% of the patients with seroconversions detected at the IEC had clinical symptoms).

The introduction of CA24 into the Americas was recorded for the first time in the fall of 1986 in the Caribbean area.¹⁾ To our knowledge, the outbreak reported in the present work in the Amazonian region of north Brazil seems to be the first notification of this virus in Brazil

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Reference

1. CDC: Acute hemorrhagic conjunctivitis caused by Coxsackievirus A24—Caribbean. *M.M.W.R.*, 36:245-251, 1987.