

CHILDHOOD MENINGITIS IN WESTERN GREECE

I. Giannakopoulos¹, S. Mantagos¹, A. Giannakopoulos², M. Eliopoulou¹,
A. Ellina¹, D.A. Papanastasiou¹

¹Department of Pediatrics ²Department of Health, School of Medicine, University of Patras, Greece
Dimapapa@med.upatras.gr

INTRODUCTION: Meningitis still has an important morbidity and mortality in children.

AIM: To study the demographic and epidemiologic data of childhood meningitis during a decade.

MATERIAL-METHOD: Statistical analysis of demographic and epidemiologic data (microbe, age, sex, seasonal and annual distribution) of 342 children with meningitis recorded in a large area of Western Greece from 1/1/91 until 31/12/00.

RESULTS: There were 211(61.7%) boys and 131(38.3%) girls. The mean age of the patients was 4.8+4.6 years, 138 (40.4%) patients were younger than 2 years old. Out of the 342 patients, 113(33%) had viral-, 46(13.4%) meningococcal-, 12(3.5%) haemophilus type b- and 4(1.1%) pneumococcal- meningitis. Meningitis was considered to be bacterial in (a) 49(14.3%) additional children with negative blood or ESF cultures but increased β -glycuronidase values in ESF and in (b) 118(34.5%) children with negative cultures because of previous antibiotic treatment but clinical and laboratory finding compatible with bacterial infection. Exacerbations of the disease were observed during 1997 and 1999 (82 and 75 cases, respectively), they were mainly due to viral infections [40 (48.85%) and 35 (46.6%) cases, respectively]. The peak-incidence of viral meningitis was during summer (58.4%) and autumn (26.5%), of meningococcal during spring (45.6%) and winter (32.6%) and of haemophilus type b during winter (33.3%) and spring (25%).

CONCLUSIONS: Meningitis often appears with exacerbations lasting for a few years. They are mainly due to viral infections. Affected are predominantly children younger than 2 years old, males more often than females. There is a seasonal prevalence depending on the infectious agent.

