

ENTERIC FEVER — STILL A CHALLENGE !

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Enteric fever is a potentially lethal global problem of public health significance. It is not only a common illness in developing countries but also a potential threat to the developed nations due to increasing air travel and global operations.¹ The renowned physicians of the globe have contributed significantly towards understanding of epidemiology and transmission of the disease during their life time.² According to WHO, world is facing 16 million cases and 600,000 deaths every year due to enteric fever.³

As we know, the mode of spread of this disease is faeco-oral. Poor personal hygiene, improper sewage disposal and unsafe drinking water are the major causes of its spread. Partially treated patients and carriers pose a continuous threat to the society. Early and accurate diagnosis is of utmost importance to save the patients from its dreadful complications.

Prevention is the best strategy, however if infection does occur, antibiotics will be needed. Adequate waste disposal and protection of food and water supplies from contamination are important public health measures to prevent enteric fever. Recent years have witnessed a dramatic change in the therapeutic response because of emergence of multi drug resistance.⁴ Multi drug resistant Enteric fever poses a great challenge to medical profession. Irrational use of antibiotics cause considerable problem in the management of typhoid fever.⁵ It is necessary to evaluate the local antibiotic sensitivities to keep the treatment options rational.

Control or elimination of enteric fever is well within the scope of modern public health. This is

accomplished, in fact in many developed countries. Control of reservoir, proper sanitation and immunization are the three important lines of defense against enteric fever. The weakest link in the chain of transmission is sanitation, which is amenable to control. However, sanitation when combined with health education, the effects tend to be cumulative. Good sanitation and proper health education is a dream in the underdeveloped parts of the world. However it can be made possible with close collaboration between the government establishment and non-government organizations. Both individual and community will is required with great and persistent zeal.

This issue of the journal contains a review article on the current trends in the management of typhoid fever. We will try to address the other aspects of this challenge in the forthcoming issues.

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