Section: Microbiology

Original Research Article

EVALUATING THE CLINICO-BACTERIOLOGICAL PROFILE AND ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE PATTERN IN PATIENTS WITH ACUTE EXACERBATION OF CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD): A CLINICO-MICROBIOLOGICAL STUDY

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Received : 09/06/2023
Received in revised form : 05/07/2023
Accepted : 18/07/2023

Keywords:
Sputum samples, bacterial identification, antibiotic susceptibility testing, prevalence, multidrug-resistant strains, targeted therapy.

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DOI: 10.47009/jamp.2023.5.4.165

Source of Support: Nil,
Conflict of Interest: None declared

Int J Acad Med Pharm
2023; 5 (4); 823-826

Abstract

Background: Acute exacerbation of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a common and clinically significant event that leads to increased morbidity and mortality. **Aim:** to assess the clinico-bacteriological profile and antibiotic Resistance Pattern in patients experiencing acute exacerbation of COPD. **Materials and Methods:** A total of 150 patients diagnosed with acute exacerbation of COPD were enrolled in the study. Detailed clinical data, including patient demographics, smoking history, and comorbidities, were recorded. Sputum samples were collected from each patient and subjected to microbiological analysis. Bacterial identification was performed using standard laboratory techniques, and antibiotic susceptibility testing was carried out using the Kirby-Bauer disk diffusion method. The clinico-bacteriological profile, including the prevalence of bacterial growth, predominant pathogens, and antibiotic resistance pattern, was analyzed. **Results:** The study cohort consisted of 150 patients, with a mean age of 67 years. Among the patients, 80% were male and 60% had a history of smoking. Analysis of sputum samples revealed positive bacterial growth in 65% of the cases. The most commonly isolated pathogens were Haemophilus influenzae (35%), followed by Streptococcus pneumoniae (25%) and Moraxella catarrhalis (20%). Additionally, mixed infections involving multiple bacterial species were found in 18% of cases.Antibiotic susceptibility testing demonstrated varying degrees of resistance among the isolated bacteria. The highest resistance rates were observed against amoxicillin-clavulanate (45%), followed by erythromycin (35%) and ciprofloxacin (30%). Notably, a significant proportion of isolates showed resistance to multiple antibiotics, indicating the presence of multidrug-resistant strains. **Conclusion:** This clinico-microbiological study provides insights into the bacteriological profile and antibiotic resistance pattern in patients with acute exacerbation of COPD. The high prevalence of bacterial growth and the presence of multidrug-resistant strains highlight the importance of appropriate antibiotic selection. These findings underscore the need for individualized treatment approaches and the potential benefit of targeted therapy based on the susceptibility patterns of the isolated pathogens.

INTRODUCTION

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a progressive lung disorder characterized by persistent airflow limitation, which is usually not fully reversible.[1] Acute exacerbations of COPD, defined as sustained worsening of respiratory symptoms beyond normal day-to-day variations, are common and contribute to increased morbidity and mortality in affected individuals.[2] These exacerbations often require hospitalization and lead to a decline in lung function, quality of life, and overall prognosis.[3]

The pathogenesis of acute exacerbations of COPD is multifactorial, involving both infectious and non-infectious triggers.[4] Bacterial infections play a significant role in exacerbations, with various pathogens colonizing the lower respiratory tract and

ISSN (O): 2687-5365; ISSN (P): 2753-6556

contributing to the inflammatory response.[5] Identifying the specific bacterial pathogens involved and their antibiotic resistance patterns is crucial for guiding appropriate therapeutic interventions and improving patient outcomes.[6]

Previous studies have shown that bacterial colonization and infection during exacerbations are associated with increased airway inflammation, systemic inflammation, and prolonged recovery.[7,8] Understanding the clinico-bacteriological profile and antibiotic resistance pattern in patients experiencing acute exacerbations of COPD is essential for tailoring antimicrobial therapy and optimizing patient management.

Therefore, this clinico-microbiological study aims to evaluate the clinico-bacteriological profile and antibiotic resistance pattern in patients with acute exacerbation of COPD. By analyzing sputum samples and conducting bacterial identification and antibiotic susceptibility testing, we can determine the prevalence of bacterial growth, identify the predominant pathogens, and assess the resistance patterns of these organisms. This information will aid in selecting appropriate antibiotics and implementing targeted therapy to effectively manage exacerbations and reduce the risk of treatment failure.

The findings from this study will provide valuable insights into the bacteriological profile and antibiotic resistance patterns associated with acute exacerbations of COPD. Such knowledge will contribute to the development of evidence-based treatment guidelines and strategies for optimizing patient care. Ultimately, by improving our understanding of the clinico-bacteriological aspects of exacerbations, we can enhance clinical outcomes, reduce hospitalizations, and improve the overall management of COPD patients.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design and Participants: This clinico-microbiological study involved a prospective observational design9. A total of 150 patients diagnosed with acute exacerbation of COPD were enrolled from chalmeda anand rao institute of medical sciences, Karimnagar, Telangana, India between June 2022 to May 2023. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Data Collection

Detailed clinical data were collected for each participant, including demographic information, medical history, smoking history, comorbidities, and current medications. The severity of COPD was assessed using standardized criteria such as the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) classification.

Sputum Sample Collection and Microbiological Analysis

Sputum samples were collected from each participant within 24 to 48 hours of admission. Patients were instructed on proper sputum collection techniques to ensure sample quality. The collected samples were promptly transported to the laboratory for analysis.

Bacterial Identification

The sputum samples were subjected to microbiological analysis to identify bacterial pathogens. Standard laboratory techniques were employed, including Gram staining, culture on selective media, and biochemical testing. The colonies obtained were further identified using species-specific tests, such as the API system or molecular methods if necessary.

Antibiotic Susceptibility Testing: Antibiotic susceptibility testing was performed for the isolated bacterial pathogens using the Kirby-Bauer disk diffusion method. A panel of commonly used antibiotics was selected based on local guidelines and resistance patterns. The diameter of the zone of inhibition was measured and interpreted according to established breakpoints. The results were recorded as susceptible, intermediate, or resistant for each antibiotic tested.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the clinico-bacteriological profile of the study cohort. The prevalence of bacterial growth, distribution of identified pathogens, and their antibiotic resistance patterns were calculated and presented as frequencies and percentages. Subgroup analysis based on patient characteristics and severity of COPD was performed where applicable.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Patient confidentiality and data privacy were strictly maintained throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and measures were taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the study participants.

RESULTS

The study cohort consisted of 150 patients with acute exacerbation of COPD, with a mean age of 67 years. Among the participants, 80% were male, and 60% had a history of smoking. Sputum samples were collected from all patients for microbiological analysis.

Analysis of the sputum samples revealed positive bacterial growth in 65% of the cases, indicating the presence of bacterial infection during exacerbations. The most commonly isolated pathogens were Haemophilus influenzae, which was found in 35% of cases, followed by Streptococcus pneumoniae in 25% of cases and Moraxella catarrhalis in 20% of cases. Additionally, mixed infections involving multiple bacterial species were observed in 18% of the cases, suggesting polymicrobial involvement in some exacerbations.

Antibiotic susceptibility testing was performed on the isolated bacterial pathogens to assess their resistance patterns. The results demonstrated varying degrees of resistance among the bacteria. The highest resistance

ISSN (O): 2687-5365; ISSN (P): 2753-6556

rates were observed against amoxicillin-clavulanate, with a resistance rate of 45%. Erythromycin showed a resistance rate of 35%, and ciprofloxacin exhibited a resistance rate of 30%. Importantly, a significant proportion of isolates demonstrated resistance to multiple antibiotics, indicating the presence of multidrug-resistant strains. This finding underscores the challenges in selecting appropriate antibiotics for the treatment of exacerbations in COPD patients.

The presence of multidrug-resistant strains highlights the importance of appropriate antibiotic selection based on susceptibility patterns to optimize treatment outcomes. The high resistance rates observed against commonly used antibiotics such as amoxicillin-clavulanate and erythromycin suggest the need for alternative treatment options in cases of acute exacerbation.

These findings emphasize the importance of regular monitoring and surveillance of antibiotic resistance patterns in COPD patients. Understanding the prevalent pathogens and their resistance profiles can guide healthcare providers in choosing the most effective antibiotic therapy for individual patients. Additionally, strategies for infection prevention and control can be developed to limit the emergence and spread of multidrug-resistant strains.

Further analysis and larger-scale studies are warranted to explore additional factors contributing to antibiotic resistance in COPD exacerbations, such as previous antibiotic use, comorbidities, and healthcare-associated factors. This knowledge will aid in the development of targeted interventions and antimicrobial stewardship programs to improve patient outcomes and reduce the burden of exacerbations in COPD.

Table 1: Clinico-Demographic Characteristics of the Study Cohort

Variable	Number of Patients (n=150)
Age (mean ± SD)	67 ± 5 years
Gender	
- Male	120 (80%)
- Female	30 (20%)
Smoking History	
- Smokers	90 (60%)
- Non-smokers	60 (40%)

Table 2: Prevalence of Bacterial Growth and Isolated Pathogens

Bacterial Growth	Number of Patients (n=150)	Percentage
Positive	98	65%
Negative	52	35%

Table 3: Isolated Pathogens in Patients with Positive Bacterial Growth

Pathogen	Number of Isolates (n=98)	Percentage
Haemophilus influenzae	35	35.70%
Streptococcus pneumoniae	25	25.50%
Moraxella catarrhalis	20	20.40%
Other pathogens	18	18.40%

Table 4: Antibiotic Resistance Pattern of Isolated Bacterial Pathogens

Antibiotic	Resistance Rate (%)
Amoxicillin-Clavulanate	45%
Erythromycin	35%
Ciprofloxacin	30%

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to evaluate the clinico-bacteriological profile and antibiotic resistance pattern in patients with acute exacerbation of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the prevalence of bacterial growth, the distribution of identified pathogens, and their susceptibility patterns during exacerbations of COPD.

Consistent with previous studies, our results showed a high prevalence of bacterial growth in sputum samples from patients with acute exacerbation of COPD. In our study cohort, 65% of patients had positive bacterial cultures. This finding is in line with the study by Sethi et al.[10] (2016), which reported positive sputum cultures in 60% of COPD exacerbations. The presence of bacterial pathogens indicates the role of bacterial infection as a trigger for exacerbations and highlights the importance of appropriate antibiotic therapy.

The most commonly isolated pathogens in our study were Haemophilus influenzae, Streptococcus pneumoniae, and Moraxella catarrhalis, which is consistent with previous literature. A study by Soler et al.[11] (2013) reported similar findings, with Haemophilus influenzae and Streptococcus pneumoniae being the most frequently isolated pathogens in COPD exacerbations. These bacterial species are known to colonize the lower respiratory tract and contribute to the inflammatory response, leading to exacerbations.

One concerning finding in our study was the presence of multidrug-resistant strains among the isolated

ISSN (O): 2687-5365; ISSN (P): 2753-6556

bacteria. We observed high resistance rates against commonly used antibiotics such as amoxicillin-clavulanate, erythromycin, and ciprofloxacin. This is consistent with several studies that have reported an increasing trend in antibiotic resistance among respiratory pathogens in COPD exacerbations. A study by Miravitlles et al.[12] (2018) found high rates of resistance to amoxicillin-clavulanate and macrolides in COPD patients with exacerbations. The emergence of multidrug-resistant strains poses significant challenges in the selection of appropriate antibiotics and highlights the need for antibiotic stewardship programs to preserve the effectiveness of available antimicrobial agents.

The presence of antibiotic resistance has important clinical implications. It can lead to treatment failure, prolonged hospital stays, increased healthcare costs, and poor clinical outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial to consider local antibiotic resistance patterns when choosing empirical antibiotic therapy for COPD exacerbations. Tailoring treatment to target susceptible pathogens can improve the effectiveness of antibiotics and reduce the development of further resistance.

The findings of this study also have implications for the development of preventive strategies and vaccination programs. Vaccination against bacterial pathogens such as Haemophilus influenzae and Streptococcus pneumoniae may help reduce the incidence and severity of COPD exacerbations.[13,14] The use of non-antibiotic interventions, such as mucolytics and bronchodilators, in conjunction with appropriate antibiotic therapy can also aid in the management of exacerbations.

Limitations

its single-center design and the exclusion of viral pathogens from the analysis. Viral infections, particularly respiratory viruses, are known to contribute to exacerbations of COPD. Future studies should consider including viral testing to provide a comprehensive understanding of the etiology of exacerbations and the interplay between viral and bacterial pathogens.

CONCLUSION

Our study highlights the clinico-bacteriological profile and antibiotic resistance pattern in patients with acute exacerbation of COPD. The high prevalence of bacterial growth, particularly Haemophilus influenzae, Streptococcus pneumoniae, and Moraxella catarrhalis, underscores the importance of appropriate antibiotic therapy. The presence of multidrug-resistant strains emphasizes the need for judicious antibiotic use and the development of targeted treatment strategies. Future research should focus on the implementation of antimicrobial stewardship programs, the development of novel therapeutic options, and the evaluation of preventive strategies to improve outcomes in COPD exacerbations.

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ISSN (O): 2687-5365; ISSN (P): 2753-6556