Toxoplasmosis

ICD-10 B58

Identification

A parasitic disease caused by the protozoan Toxoplasma gondii. The parasite infects most commonly warm-blooded animals, including humans, but the primary host is the feline (cat) family. Animals are infected by eating infected meat, or by transmission from mother to fetus. Although cats are often blamed for spreading toxoplasmosis, contact with raw meat is a more significant source of human infections in many countries.

Clinical features:

• 80% of cases are asymptomatic.

• Symptomatic patient has enlarged lymph nodes, especially around the neck, muscle pain, intermittent fever and malaise.

• Repeated abortion in child baring women.

• In early pregnancy brain damage, liver and spleen and eye may occur.

• In late pregnancy may result in persistent eye infection through life.

• Toxoplasmosis acquired after birth usually result in no symptoms or only mild illness.

Diagnosis: Biopsy, Serological test (IFAT, ELASA)

Infectious agent

Protozoan Toxoplasma gondii

Occurrence

Situation analysis in Iraq of Toxoplasmosis from 2000 – 2009

The disease is reported in all provinces in Iraq, affect mainly females. High numbers of cases were reported in Erbil (373), Basrah (102), Baghdad Rusafa (55), and Diyala (35) in 2009.

Reservoir

Main host is cats; intermediate hosts include sheep and goats.

Mode of transmission

• Adult most acquire toxoplasmosis by eating raw meat or undercooked meat infected with tissue cyst.

• Children may become infected by ingestion of oocytes in dirt or sand pit after fecal contamination by cats, particularly kitten or other animals.

• Blood transfusion and organ transplantation.

• Trans placental transmission may occur when a woman has a primary infection during pregnancy.

3.18.6 Incubation period

5-23 days

3.18.7 Period of communicability

Toxoplasmosis is not passed from person-to-person, except in instances of mother-to-child (congenital) transmission and blood transfusion or organ transplantation. Kittens and cats can shed millions of oocysts in their feces for as long as 3 weeks after infection. Oocysts shed become infective from 1-5 days later and can remain infective in moist soil or water for over a year. Additionally, oocysts can remain infective in the meat of an infected animal until it is thoroughly cooked.

3.18.8 Susceptibility and resistance

General. Asymptomatic pregnant woman can transmit infection to her unborn child.

Infection is often highest in areas of the world that have hot, humid climates and lower altitudes.

3.18.9 Methods of control

Increase health education of child bearing women and advise them to:

• Cook meat thoroughly and avoid uncooked meat.

• Wear gloves during gardening and wash hands thoroughly after work and before eating.

• Control stray cats.

3.18.10 Management of the disease

 Those without symptoms typically do not need treatment.

 Medications to treat the infection include an antimalarial drug and antibiotics. AIDS patients should continue treatment for as long as their immune system is weak to prevent the disease from reactivating.