Community-Acquired MRSA Hit L.A. Children

WASHINGTON — A clonal outbreak of community-acquired methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (Staph aureus (CAMRSA)) infections in hospitalized children less than 18 years of age was reported during 2003 in Los Angeles County, said Dr. Bancroft of the county health department.

Mean age of the children was 6.25 years (range 0-17), 51% were female, 66% were Hispanic, 16% white, 15% black, and the remainder said they were "other." Their mean length of stay was 5.13 days (range 1-30). Diagnoses included cellulitis in 44%, abscess in 36%, and a combination of the two in 11%.

In 23%, chart notes indicated a misdiagnosis of possible insect or spider bites, and 75% of the total 135 who had been treated with antibiotics were initially treated inappropriately with β-lactams, she said at the conference, sponsored by the American Society for Microbiology.

Among 82 for whom a caregiver was interviewed, 24 (29%) had a household contact with a skin infection within a month of the child's infection.

Other nosocomial risk factors were present in 29 (35%), while risk factors for community-acquired infection were present in 38 (46%), including 9 (11%) who had contact with a recently incarcerated person.

Of 83 isolates analyzed, 79 (96%) were consistent with the USA 300; ST:8 CAMRSA genotype, even though many of the children had nosocomial risk factors.

During the 6 months, the 140 pediatric CAMRSA cases in Los Angeles far outnumbered other common reportable diseases, including salmonella (99) and invasive pneumococcal disease (84), she noted.

—Miriam E. Tucker

Verbatim

‘This “back fat” causes obvious and unattractive bumps and ripples underneath clothing.’

Dr. Naomi Lawrence, on a postmenopausal phenomenon that can be addressed with tumescent liposuction, p. 10.