Etiology of urinary tract infection and drug resistance cases of uropathogenes

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Abstract

Background: Multidrug resistant bacterial isolates have been frequently reported from different parts of the world as emerging treatment problem.

Objectives: The study was conducted to find out etiology of urinary tract infection and drug resistance trend among clinical pathogens in urinary tract.

Methods: Mid-stream urine samples from patients suspected of urinary tract infection were collected for routine culture and antibiotic susceptibility testing and were processed according to the standard laboratory methods.

Results: In this study 41.7% urine samples showed significant bacterial growth. Gram negative bacteria were the predominant organisms. Among them *Escherichia coli* was the predominant isolate (85.1%) whereas *Enterococcus faecalis* (40.6%), was the major Gram positive isolate. Among culture positive cases organisms were isolated in highest frequency (29.5%) in the age group 21 to 30 years. Urinary tract infections were found more common in females (61.1%) than in males (38.9%). Nitrofurantoin (82.2%) and Ofloxacin (57.8%) were found to be the most effective drugs against Gram negative organisms, whereas for Gram positive organisms, Nitrofurantoin (87.5%) and Gentamycin (78.1%) were found to be the most effective drugs. *Escherichia coli* was found sensitive to Nitrofurantoin (89.3%) followed by Ofloxacin (63.3%). *Enterococcus faecalis* was most susceptible to Nitrofurantion (92.3%) followed by Cotrimoxazole (76.9%).

Conclusion: In this study, among the participants 41.7% had culture positive urinary tract infection. Drug resistance was found to be high in both Gram negative and Gram positive organisms. The high prevalence of drug resistance among urinary tract infection patients calls for the need of judicious measures for control of this infection and knowledge of patterns of resistance helps in deciding empirical therapy for urinary tract infection.

Key words: E. coli, MDR, Urinary tract infection

INTRODUCTION

In the recent years, incidence of multidrug resistance in pathogenic and opportunistic bacteria has been increasingly documented¹. These multidrug-resistant bacteria have also created immense clinical problems in cancer and immune compromised patients. Most important multidrug-resistant bacteria on the global scale include Gram-positive (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus (S. aureus)*, vancomycin-resistant Enterococci) and Gram-negative bacteria (members of enterobacteriaceae producing plasmid-mediated extended spectrum β -lactamase (ES β L)) and others like *Pseudomonas aeruginosa (P. aeruginosa)*, *Mycobacterium*

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*tuberculosis*². Careless and injudicious use of antibiotics as well as empirical antimicrobial therapy has been the major contributing factor in the emergence of multi drug resistant bacteria. Antibiotic resistance has been an emerging problem in the world³.

Urinary tract infection (UTI) is a common bacterial disease, often contributing to frequent morbidity in out-patients as well as hospitalized patients⁴. Clinical experience has indicated the presence of numerous cases of antibiotic resistance to common antibiotics by uro-pathogens in both developed and developing countries⁵. Resistances to newer and more potent antimicrobials are no exceptions, making therapeutic options very limited to certain antimicrobial agents like Carbapenem, Colistin and Fosfomycin⁶.

Tabiban et al conducted a study to assess the association between host characteristics and uropathogens in USA

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and found that P. aeroginosa can cause UTI to those patients who have undergone urinary tract procedures (43% versus 15% overall), have a neurogenic bladder (29% versus 12% overall), have received recent antibiotic therapy (52% versus 24% overall), and a male (76% versus 28% overall). Proteus mirabilis (P. mirabilis) can cause UTI primarily to those patients who have a foreign body in the lower urinary tract (48% versus 30% overall)7. Amiri et al performed a study in Iran to assess an association between hygiene practices and sexual intercourse to UTI and found that sexual intercourse \geq 3 times per week (Odds Ratio, OR: 5.62), recent UTI (OR: 3.27), not washing genitals pre-coitus (OR: 2.89), not voiding urine post-coitus (OR: 8.62) and washing genitals from back to front (OR: 2.96) were found to be associated with UTI⁸. Antimicrobial therapy of UTI caused by Escherichia coli (E. coli) is often impaired due to the resistance to commonly used antimicrobial agents ^{6,9}. E. coli has been reported to be MDR by possessing the antibiotic resistant genes in its transferable R-plasmid ¹⁰.

Updated knowledge of causal bacteria and their susceptibility patterns are important for proper selection and use of antibiotics as well as for an appropriate prescribing policy. The aim of this study was to determine drug resistant urinary pathogens, knowledge of which could be helpful in formulating and monitoring the antibiotic policy and proper empirical therapy.

METHODS

A descriptive study was conducted from July 2011 to November 2011. The study included all patients suspected of urinary tract infection who visited outpatient department (OPD) and inpatient department. The research objective and methods were explained to the patients and informed consent was obtained from each of them before collection of specimen. In this study mid-stream urine samples from 996 patients suspected of urinary tract infection were collected for routine culture and antibiotic susceptibility testing and were processed according to the standard laboratory methods. The urine samples were cultured onto MacConkey agar and blood agar plates by the semi-quantitative culture technique using a standard calibrated loop. Known volume (0.001 ml) of mixed uncentrifuged urine was innoculated on the surface of MacConkey agar (MA) and blood agar (BA). The plates were then aerobically incubated at 37°C overnight. Colony count was performed to calculate the number of colony forming units (CFU) per ml of urine and the bacterial count was reported as: <10⁴/ml organisms: not significant; 10⁴ to 10⁵/ml organisms: doubtful significance (suggest repeat specimen); >10⁵/ml organisms: significant bacteriuria.

The identification of bacterial isolates was done using standard microbiological techniques as described in Bergey's Manual of Systemic Bacteriology¹¹ which comprises of studying the colony characters, staining reactions and biochemical tests. Antibiotic susceptibility test of different isolates were performed by Kirby-Bauer disk diffusion method on Mueller Hinton agar (MHA). The antibiotic discs used for the susceptibility tests were from Hi-Media Laboratories Private Limited and included Amoxicillin (10 μ g), Cefixime (5 μ g), Cefotaxime (30 μ g), Ciprofloxacin (5 μ g), Cotrimoxazole (25 μ g), Erythromycin (15 μ g), Nitrofurantoin (300 μ g), Norfloxacin (10 μ g) and Ofloxacin (5 μ g). Data was analyzed by EPI-Info version 3.3.2, document version 8.08 (updated September 2005).

RESULTS

Out of 996 urine samples proceeded; 416 (41.7%) samples showed significant bacterial growth, among them 384 isolates were Gram negative and 32 were Gram positive organisms (Figure 1).

Among Gram negative isolates, *E. coli* was the predominant isolate (85.1%) followed by *C. freundii* (8.3%), *E. aerogenes* (2%), *C. diversus* (1.3%), *P. aeruginosa* (1%), *P. mirabilis* (1%), whereas *E. faecalis* (40.6%), *CoNS* (37.5%), *S. aureus* (12.5%), Beta haemolytic streptococci (9.3%) were Gram positive isolates (Table 1).

Table 1: Species wise distribution of uro-pathogens

Uro-pathogens	Number	Percentage
Gram negative	384	100%
Escherichia coli (E. coli)	327	85.1%
Citrobacter freundii (C. freundii)	32	8.3%
Enterobacter aerogenes (E. aerogenes)	8	2%
Citrobacter diversus (C. diversus)	5	1.3%
Pseudomonas aeruginosa (P. aeruginosa)	4	1%
Proteus mirabilis (P. mirabilis)	4	1%
Klebsiella pneumoniae (K. pneumoniae)	3	0.78%
Proteus vulgaris (P. vulgaris)	1	0.26%
Gram positive	32	100%
Enterococcus faecalis (E. faecalis)	13	40.6%
Coagulase negative Staphylococcus species (CoNS)	12	37.5%
Staphylococcus aureus (S. aureus)	4	12.5%
Beta haemolytic Streptococci	3	9.3%

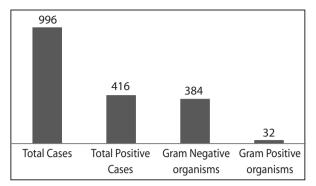


Figure 1: Growth profile and distribution of Gram positive and Gram negative organisms

Table 2: Age and gender wise distribution of uropathogens

Age group	Total no	Total number of isolates			
(years)	of sample	Male	Female	Total	
0-10	59	10	13	23 (5.53%)	
11-20	93	15	32	47 (11.30%)	
21-30	305	47	76	123 (29.57%)	
31-40	174	31	58	89 (21.39%)	
41-50	131	21	36	57 (13.70%)	
51-60	77	16	20	36 (8.65%)	
61-70	80	17	10	27 (6.49%)	
71-80	77	5	9	14 (3.36%)	

Maximum number of culture positive cases (29.57%) belonged to the age group 21 to 30 years followed by age group 31 to 40 years (21.39%) and age group 41 to 50 years (13.70%).

Table 3 shows antibiotic resistance pattern of different Gram negative isolates. *E. coli* was found susceptible to

Nitrofurantoin (89.3%), followed by Ofloxacin (63.3%). Ofloxacin (71.8%) was the most effective antibiotics against C. freundii followed by Norfloxacillin and Cotrimoxazole (34.3%). C. diversus showed maximal susceptibility (100%) to Ciprofloxacin, Norfloxacin, and Ofloxacin followed by Cotrimoxazole, Nitrofurantoin, and Cefixime (60%). E. aerogenes Cefotaxime showed 75% sensitivity to Nitrofurantoin followed by Norfloxacin, Ofloxacin and Cefixime (62.5%). P. aeruginosa was susceptible to majority of antibiotics. It was 100% sensitive to Ciprofloxacin, Cefotaxime, Ceftriaxone, Gentamycin and 100% resistant to Cefixime and Cotrimoxazole. Isolates of P. mirabilis were found to be 100% susceptible against Norfloxacin. In K. pneumoniae, the most effective antibiotics were Ciprofloxacin, Cefotaxime, Norfloxacin and Ofloxacin (100%) followed by Cotrimoxazole (66.6%). P. vulgaris was 100% susceptible to Cotrimoxazole, Cefotaxime, Cefixime, Norfloxacin.

Table 4: Antibiotic susceptibility pattern of overall Gram negative bacilli

Antibiotic	Sensitive		Resistant	
	Ν	%	Ν	%
Amoxycillin	200	52.1 %	184	47.9 %
Cotrimoxazole	193	50.3 %	191	49.7 %
Ciprofloxacin	209	54.4 %	175	45.6 %
Cefotaxime	203	52.9 %	181	47.1 %
Cefixime	191	49.7 %	193	50.3 %
Norfloxacin	211	54.9 %	173	45.1 %
Ofloxacin	222	57.8 %	162	42.2 %
Nitrofurantoin	316	82.3 %	68	17.7 %

For Gram negative isolates, 8 different antibiotics were tested. Among them Nitrofurantoin was found

Antibiotic	Escherichia coli	Citrobacter freundii	Citrobacter diversus	Enterobacter aerogenes	Pseudomonas aeruginosa	Proteus mirabilis	Klebsiella pneumoniae	Proteus vulgaris
	n=327	n=32	n=5	n=8	n=4	n=4	n=3	n=1
Amoxycillin	82.5%	96.8%	100%	100%	50%	75%	100%	100%
Cotrimoxazole	42.2%	65.6%	40%	50%	100%	25%	33.3%	0%
Ciprofloxacin	48.8%	71.8%	0%	62.5%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Cefotaxime	43.1%	81.2%	40%	50%	0%	25%	0%	0%
Cefixime	51.3%	84.3%	40%	37.5%	100%	25%	66.6%	0%
Norfloxacin	59.6%	65.6%	0%	37.5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Ofloxacin	36.7%	28.1%	0%	37.5%	0%	25%	0%	0%
Nitrofurantoin	10.7%	78.1%	40%	25%	75%	100%	66.6%	100%

Antibiotic	Enterococcus faecalis	Coagulase negative staphylococci	Staphylococcus aureus	Beta haemolytic Streptococci
	n=13	n=12	n=4	n=3
Gentamycin	38.4%	25%	25%	0%
Norfloxacin	61.5%	33.3%	75%	66.6%
Amoxycillin	61.5%	50%	0%	66.6%
Cefotaxime	53.8%	25%	0%	66.6%
Cotrimoxazole	23%	0%	25%	33.3%
Ciprofloxacin	61.5%	8.3%	100%	66.6%
Nitrofurantoin	7.7%	33.3%	75%	0%
Erythromycin	61.5%	58.3%	0%	0%

Table 5:	Antibiotic resistance	pattern of Gram	positive organisms
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to be the most effective (82.2%) followed by Ofloxacin (57.8%), Norfloxacin (54.9%), whereas most isolates were resistant to Cefixime (50.2%) and Cotrimoxazole (49.7%) (Table 4).

Table 5 shows the antibiotics susceptibility pattern of Gram positive organism. *E. faecalis* was found 92.3% sensitive to Nitrofurantoin followed by Cotrimoxazole (76.9%). In Coagulase negative staphylococci showed 100% sensitivity to Nitrofurantoin followed by Gentamycin (91.6%). *S. aureus* was 100% sensitive to Norfloxacin, Amoxycillin and Nitrofurantoin. Beta haemolytic Streptococci showed 100% sensitivity to Amoxicillin, Gentamycin and Nitrofurantoin.

Table 6: Antibiotic susceptibility pattern of overall Gram positive cocci

	Sensitive		Resistant	
Antibiotic	Number	%	Number	%
Cephalexin	21	65%	11	35%
Gentamycin	25	78.1%	7	21.9%
Erythromycin	14	43.8%	18	56.2%
Norfloxacin	15	46.9%	17	53.1%
Amoxycillin	22	68.8%	10	31.2%
Cefotaxime	19	59.4%	13	40.6%
Cotrimoxazole	20	62.5%	12	37.5%
Ciprofloxacin	18	56.3%	14	43.7%
Nitrofurantoin	28	87.5%	4	12.5%

Among the nine different antibiotics tested against Gram positive isolates, Nitrofurantoin was found to be the most effective (87.5%) sensitivity, followed by Gentamycin (78.1%), Amoxycilin (68.8%), Cephalexin (65%), Cotrimoxazole (62.5%), Cefotaxime (59.4%) and Ciprofloxacin (56.3%) (Table 6).

DISCUSSION

Antimicrobial resistance is a global problem. It is now accepted as a major public health issue and has significant implication on health and patient care. Resistance to antimicrobial drugs is associated with high morbidity and mortality, high health-care cost and prolonged hospitalization. The problem of antimicrobial resistance is more troublesome to developing countries. World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Commission (EC) have recognized the importance of studying the emergence and determinants of resistance and the need for strategies for its control. Microorganisms and their resistance patterns vary from hospital to hospital and even from clinic to clinic in the same hospital.

The findings of present study showed that 41.7% urine samples showed significant bacterial growth. A similar study carried out by Chhetri *et al* also showed low number of growth positivity¹². In this study, UTI was found to be more common in female (61.1%) than male (38.9%). Previous study done by Jha and Bapat¹³, Aiyegoro *et al* also found similar results. This suggests that the incidence of urinary tract infection was higher in females than males which was found statistically significant (p<0.05)¹⁴. The higher incidence of urinary tract infection in females might be the result of a variety of factors, such as shorter urethra and closer proximity to the anus.

In culture positive cases the age group of 21 to 30 years had higher prevalence of UTI (29.57%). This age group is more sexually active and chances are high that they suffer from UTI. Previous study done by Steenberg et al¹⁵, Rajbhandari and Shrestha¹⁶ also found similar results. Leigh had found that Nuns and unmarried women have lower prevalence of UTI as compared to married women¹⁷. Out of 416 uro-pathogens, 384 (92.3%) were Gram negative bacilli and 32 (7.6%) were Gram positive cocci. Higher frequency of *E. coli* in this study resembles to the various studies done by different scientists in different parts of the world²⁰⁻²². In a similar study conducted by Das et al²³ among the total isolates, 94.5% were Gram negative bacilli and 5.5% were Gram positive cocci which revealed that UTI is primarily caused by Gram negative bacteria. This finding agrees with studies done in the other parts of the world^{24, 25}. Okada et al also found 70.2% Gram negative bacilli and 29.8% Gram positive isolates²⁶. Similarly in a study done by Obi *et al* in Africa among 10 species of bacteria, the distribution of Gram negative and Gram positive bacteria were 88.5% and 9.7% respectively in UTI positive sample. This finding suggests the source of the infecting organisms is usually the faecal flora of the patients²⁷. In a similar study done by Levett in India¹⁸ and Karki et al in Kathmandu higher percentage of Gram negative rods were found¹⁹.

In our study, among the various drugs used against Gram negative isolates, Nitrofurantoin followed by Ofloxacin with susceptibility of 82.2% and 57.8% respectively were found to be the most effective drugs. Similar results were obtained in the study conducted by Gales et al²⁸.

Of the nine different antibiotics used against Gram positive isolates, Nitrofurantoin (87.5%), Gentamycin Amoxicillin (68.7%), (78.1%) Cephalexin (65%), Cotrimoxazole (62.5%), Cefotaxime (59.3%), Ciprofloxacin (56.2%), Norfloxacin (46.8%) and Erythromycin (43.7%) were the most effective drugs. Erythromycin was found to be least effective against Gram positive isolates (susceptibility was 43.7%). Similar study conducted by Abubakar³¹ found higher resistance than this study the mean sensitivity of the antibiotics were Ofloxacin (63.8%), Ampicillin (25.4%), Nitrofurantoin (55.4%), Cotrimoxazole (41.8%), and Erythromycin (51.6%). In this study, among Gram positive organisms E. feacalis was the most common isolate. Sensitivity to Nitrofurantoin, Cotrimoxazole and Gentamycin were 92.3%, 76.9% and 61.5% respectively.

E. coli, was the most common isolate, Nitrofurantoin (89.3%) was found to be the most effective drug followed by Ofloxacin (63.3%), Ciprofloxacin (58.1%) and Cotrimoxazole (58.1%). Study conducted by Baral et al³² showed that resistance to Nitrofurantion was similar to this study (17.6%) but study conducted by Abubakar³¹

found resistance higher than this study. Mutations at the target site i.e. *gyrA*, which is a gyrase subunit gene, and parC, which encodes a topoisomerase subunit, confer resistance to fluoroquinolones²⁹. In addition to this mechanism, there are more than seven efflux systems in E. coli that can export structurally unrelated antibiotics; these multidrug resistance efflux pump (MDR pump) systems contribute to intrinsic resistance for toxic compounds such as antibiotics, antiseptics, detergents, and dyes³⁰. Higher resistance rate is seen in tertiary hospitals especially where both inpatient and outpatients are present. It may be due to those patients having more complicated UTIs and thus exposed to more resistant flora, or may have failed previous therapy, all of which may account for the increased resistance observed.

A large number of the bacterial isolates in this study showed multiple antibiotic resistances. The present study data gives an idea about the trend of increasing antibiotic resistance of uropathogens in UTI, which may be due to many factors including misuse of antibiotics by the health care professionals or non-skilled practitioners, misuse of antibiotics by the general public (antibiotics can be purchased in Nepal without a prescription), and inadequate surveillance due to lack of information arising from routine antimicrobial susceptibility testing. The discovery and development of antibiotics is undoubtedly one of the greatest advances of modern medicine. Unfortunately the emergence of antibiotic resistance bacteria is threatening the effectiveness of many antimicrobial agents which has increased the hospital stay of the patients which in turn causes economic burden.

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of UTI was found comparatively higher in female patients than in male patients and Gram negative organisms were found predominant. The high prevalence of drug resistance among UTI patients calls for the need of judicious measures for control of this infection and knowledge of patterns of resistance helps in deciding empirical therapy for UTI.

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