

# Clinical Profile, Radiological Resolution and Risk Factors Associated with Community Acquired Pneumonia

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Pneumonia is a widespread and commonest infectious lung disease that causes inflammation which lead to reduced oxygenation. Indeed, it is the leading cause of child death in the world. The study was carried out to fine out the demographic, clinical characteristics and radiologic resolution of Pneumonia in children between two months to 16 years of age. **Material and Methods:** A prospective study done in 121 cases over 18 month period in patients admitted in paediatric department of Dhulikhel hospital. Demography, clinical profile, diagnosis, Down's scoring at presentation, response of treatment and risk factor for Community acquired pneumonia were analysed using descriptive statics. Chest radiography was done on admission and every two weeks until its complete resolution occurred. **Results:** Community acquired pneumonia was significantly common in children less than one year ( $p=0.022$ ). The common symptoms of Community acquired pneumonia observed in this study were cough (80%) and fever (66%). The total leukocyte count had low degree of association with pneumonia. More than half of patients (54.08%) with community acquired pneumonia had radiographic resolution at two weeks. The respiratory distress was significantly high ( $p<0.0001$ ) in children who delayed to seek medical treatment in a health facility by three days. Anaemia, lymphopenia, thrombocytopenia, sepsis and haemorrhagic pleural effusion were the clinical characteristics associated with fatal Community acquired pneumonia. **Conclusion:** Clinical presentations varied in Community acquired pneumonia with different age groups. Chest radiography was still the best investigation for the diagnosis of pneumonia and most of the radiological clearance occurred in two weeks.

**Key words:** Community acquired pneumonia, chest radiography

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## Introduction

Pneumonia is an acute illness in which the alveolar air spaces of the lung become inflamed and filled with fluid and white blood cells, giving rise to the appearance of consolidation on the chest radiograph. In developing countries, where patients are often treated

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without seeing a doctor, the World Health Organization (WHO)<sup>1</sup> defines clinical pneumonia simply as an acute episode of cough or difficulty breathing associated with an increased respiratory rate. Most recently, the WHO<sup>2</sup> has also pioneered the standardized interpretation of chest x-ray to define bacterial pneumonia. (i.e. signs of alveolar consolidation and/or pleural effusion)

Nearly one to two million children younger than five years die every year from pneumonia<sup>3</sup>. In Nepal, annual incidence of pneumonia in under-five year's children is 90/1000. This incidence was found in 2006 survey.<sup>4</sup> Another Nepal demographic health survey 2011/ 2012<sup>5</sup>, done by Ministry of Health and Population, has also shown similar. It affects all paediatric age groups, though the highest incidence is in the under-five years<sup>6</sup>. Anaemia, lymphopenia, thrombocytopenia, sepsis and haemorrhagic pleural effusion were the clinical characteristics associated with fatal Community acquired pneumonia<sup>7</sup>.

Although this is a leading cause of under five children mortality, the research done in Nepal on this topic is very limited. The aim of this study is to find out the demographic, clinical characteristics and radiological resolution of Community acquired pneumonia. The clinical characteristics associated with Community acquired pneumonia were also studied

## Material and Methods

This is a prospective study done for a period of one and half years from December 2014 to May 2016. All children from two month to 16 years who were admitted in Paediatric ward of Dhulikhel hospital with clinically diagnosed and radiologically confirmed cases of pneumonia were included in this study. Every case was subjected to a detailed history and clinical examination, followed by relevant investigations. All cases admitted from emergency department and sick child admitted from OPD, complete blood count and blood culture were sent. On admission, every day after admission and at the time of discharge Downs' score was obtained. Downs Scoring System<sup>8</sup> is an index designed to objectively

assess the clinical severity of respiratory distress. The scores have therapeutic and prognostic significance but are not as reliable as blood gas measurements. They are to be used as an adjunct to (not as a substitute for) blood gas determinations. Downs Scoring System was shown below.

The patients were followed every day for the response to the treatment till the child cured. The questionnaire contained identification, clinical profile, and investigation, response to drug and radiological response. Written informed consent was taken from the parents before enrolling them in this study after a careful and complete explanation of the study and purpose. Patients were followed for a maximum of three months' time. At each follow up visit in two weeks interval, physical examination was done and repeated chest radiography till it became normal. All chest radiographs were re-evaluated by an experienced radiologist. The Institutional review committee approved the study.

## Results

A total of 121 patients with community acquired pneumonia were enrolled where 35.5% were females and 64.5% males. In the present study as shown in Table 1, the incidence of pneumonia was higher among children less than five years (n=81), out of which 44 (36.34%) were infants and 37 (30.57%) were between 1-5 years. Here, 40 (33.05%) were more than 5 years.

The most common symptoms among all age group was cough, observed in total 80%, which was most significantly common in children less than one year ( $p=0.022$ ). The next common presenting symptom was fever 72%, shortness of breath 38%, common cold 38%. Chest pain and myalgia were significantly seen in children more than five years with  $p$ -value of 0.001 and 0.003 respectively. Among the clinical sign, crepitation were heard in 72.72%, decreased air entry in 51.23% and rhonchi was heard in 18.18 % cases. Rhonchi was significantly observed in children less than one year with  $p$ -value of 0.025.

## Downs Score for evaluation of respiratory Distress

Downs Score	0	1	2
Cyanosis	None	Cyanotic in air	Cyanotic in 40% O <sub>2</sub>
Retraction	None	Mild	Severe
Grunting	None	Audible with stethoscope	Audible without stethoscope
Air entry	Clear	Delayed or decreased	Barely audible
Respiratory Rate	60	60-80	80 or apneic episodes

> 4 = Clinical respiratory distress

> 8 = Impending respiratory failure

## Community Acquired Pneumonia

The complete blood count was done in total 95 Cases where 35.8% had high white blood cell count and 30.9% had high neutrophil count. Increased ESR was noted in 11.8% children with pneumonia. Blood cultures were obtained from 40 (33.1%) children. Overall, the prevalence of bacteremia (blood culture positive) was 9.9%. Among the culture positive cases, 75% has *Streptococcus pneumoniae* followed by *Klebsiella* in 25% cases.

Consolidation was more prevalent in the right than left lung (100Vs11), and was most frequent in right middle zone 47.9% followed by right upper zone 22.3% and then in right lower zone 12.4%. Bronchopneumonia was observed in 8.3% cases shown in Table 3. Pleural effusion with consolidation was seen in 5.78% children. Six 4.95% children had consolidation with collapse of lung.

The radiographic resolution was slightly slower in patients with pleural effusion. A total of 121 patients with CAP, 80.99 % had regular follow up in every two weeks

with chest x-ray till complete resolution. After two weeks follow-up, 53/98 (57.6%) had complete radiographic resolution. After six weeks follow-up, 90/98 (91.83%) had complete radiographic resolution. None of the patients developed deterioration of chest radiography during the follow up period.

The median delay from the onset of illness to the time seeking treatment in a health facility was 5.5 days (Table 5). Twenty six percent cases sought treatment within two days, 66.11% to 3-7 days and 7.3% took more than eight days. Children who delayed to seek medical treatment in a health facility by three days were more likely to present with moderate to severe respiratory distress with high significance ( $p=0.0001$ ).

Out of 121 patients, 119 (98.34%) patients improved and were discharged. Three (2.47%) patients died. Among all deaths, one occurred due to sepsis with pulmonary haemorrhage and two were caused by sepsis with multiple organ failure. All of them at the time of presentation had anaemia, leukopenia, lymphopenia and thrombocytopenia.

**Table 1:** Age and Sex Distribution of community acquired Pneumonia

		Sex				Total	
		Male		Female		Total	%
		Total	%	Total	%		
Age	< 1 Year	24	54.5%	20	45.5%	44	100.0%
	1-5 years	24	64.9%	13	35.1%	37	100.0%
	> 5 Years	30	75.0%	10	25.0%	40	100.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>64.5%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>35.5%</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 2:** Clinical profile of CAP in different age group

Clinical Profile	Age			Total	p-value
	<1year	1-5 years	>5 years		
1. Fever	26	26	28	80	0.46
2. Headache	2	5	13	20	0.002
3. Cough	41	26	30	97	0.022
4. Nausea/Vomiting	13	7	8	28	0.448
5. Common cold	18	17	11	46	0.221
6. Anorexia	11	12	13	36	0.688
7. Myalgia	0	1	7	8	0.003
8. Chest pain	0	7	15	22	0.001
9. Dyspnoea/SOB	19	15	13	47	0.585
10. Effusion/empyema	1	1	5	7	0.084
11. Collapse lung	2	2	2	6	0.984
12. Sepsis	0	0	1	1	0.360
13. Decrease air entry	21	19	22	62	0.791
14. Crepitation	35	27	24	86	0.136
15. Rhonchi	12	8	2	22	0.025

**Table 3:** Distribution of lobar pneumonia according to zone involved in roentgenogram.

Distribution of lobar pneumonia	Total (n=121)	Percent (%)
Rt. Upper Zone	27	22.3
Rt. Middle Zone	58	47.9
Rt. Lower Zone	15	12.4
Lf. Upper Zone	6	5.0
Lf. Middle Zone	3	2.5
Lf. Lower Zone	2	1.7
Broncho Pneumonia	10	8.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 4:** Pattern of Resolution of Radiological abnormalities associated with CAP.

Duration of radiological resolution	Total (n=98)	Percentage (%)
2 weeks	53	54.08%
4 weeks	7	7.14%
6 weeks	30	30.61%
8 weeks	6	6.12%
10 weeks	1	1.02%
12 weeks	1	1.02%

**Table 5:** Relation between the duration of health seeking time to the hospital and Down' Scoring

Health seeking time to hospital	Down' Scoring Group			Total	p-value
	0-3	4-7	>8		
1-2	31	1	0	32	.000
3-7	64	16	0	80	
>8	0	7	2	9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>121</b>	

## Discussion

The study identified a significant proportion of under-five pneumonia burden with male and female ratio of 1.69:1. A study conducted on children hospitalized with pneumonia in Dhulagiri Zonal Hospital of Nepal showed male to female ratio of 1.5:1 with a significant proportion of the under-five pneumonia burden.<sup>9</sup> The same finding of health disparity being associated with higher pneumonia cases among hospitalized male children than in female has been reported by the studies conducted in Bangladesh<sup>10,11</sup>, where the male female ratio were 2:1 and 1.4:1 respectively. This could also be due to higher rates of care seeking for male children than for female children, giving strong preference for sons in the south Asian regions<sup>12</sup>.

The common symptoms of CAP, observed in this study was consistent with other studies where Shamo'on data showed, the most sensitive and specific symptoms for prediction of pneumonia was cough in 71%, fever in 70% and fast breathing in 65% children<sup>13</sup>. Another study done in Manipal Teaching hospital<sup>14</sup> also showed, the commonest mode of presentation to be

cough 76% followed by fever in 64%. All the cases of CAP had radiological confirmation with consolidation in one or multiple lobes. On the basis of roentgenogram, right lung was involved in 82.6% cases in which right middle zone were most frequently involved in 47.9% children. This is because of large diameter and more vertical direction of the right main bronchus. Ude data<sup>15</sup> showed, right lung involvement in 79.0% of children but in contrast right upper zone consolidation was much higher around 37.0% of children. Another retrospective study done by P Rijal<sup>16</sup> in Nepal Medical college also showed right sided lobar pneumonia in 60.6% and right middle zone was most commonly involved in 42.4% but in contrast left lower zone in 33.3%. The incidence of consolidation with effusion (5.7%) and atelectasis (4.9%), was almost similar in comparison to the previous study done by P Rijal<sup>16</sup> where incidence of consolidation with effusion was 8.3% and with atelectasis was 4.1%.

The radiographic resolution seen in the present study is comparable to previous study<sup>17</sup> that reported radiological cure rate of 50.6% after two weeks and 66.7% after four weeks of diagnosis of CAP. This is

also comparable to previous studies<sup>18, 19</sup> that reported radiological cure rates of 35.1% to 87% 3-4 weeks after diagnosis of CAP.

Similar to our study other authors Kumar A<sup>19</sup> and Lakhani D<sup>20</sup> also reported high count of 48.5% and 43.8% respectively. These all studies also suggest that total leukocyte count has low degree of association with pneumonia. Blood culture was positive in 30% cases (among those cases whose blood culture was sent) which was higher in comparison to other studies<sup>20,21</sup> where positive blood culture were seen in 6.1% and 7.1% respectively. This may be due to late presentation in our country. In the present study blood culture was positive usually in children who were sick for more than five days without any treatment outside and admitted in PICU with sepsis. Streptococcus pneumonia was the commonest bacteraemia seen in Pneumonia. Studies conducted in Manipal Teaching Hospital<sup>14</sup> and Children's hospital of Philadelphia<sup>22</sup> had shown, the Streptococcus pneumoniae being commonest organism isolated in blood.

Children who delayed to seek medical treatment in a health facility by three days or more were more likely to present with moderate to severe respiratory distress. This finding was consistent with a study in Kenya<sup>23</sup> that found median duration of illness before care is sought to be four days and maximum number

of patients presented with in 3-7 days with moderate to severe respiratory distress. Another study in Uganda<sup>24</sup> also found the median duration of illness before care is sought to be seven days and more likely to present with severe pneumonia.

Among the clinical characteristics, severe CAP was associated mainly with initial presentation of anaemia, lymphopenia, thrombocytopenia, sepsis and haemorrhagic pleural effusion. This finding was consistent with the study done by Wang in Taiwan<sup>7</sup> where fatal CAP was associated mainly with initial presentation of anaemia, lymphopenia, thrombocytopenia, sepsis and disseminated intravenous coagulopathy.

## Conclusion

The incidence of pneumonia was higher among children less than five years. The most common symptom was cough and fever. The laboratory investigation like total count, differential leukocyte count and blood culture has low degree of association with pneumonia. Chest radiography is an important diagnostic tool in patients suspected of having lower respiratory tract infection to confirm or exclude a diagnosis of pneumonia. Consolidation was more prevalence in right middle zone. Radiographs are not always recommended for routine follow-up in patients that has clinically improved.

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