

OSTEOARTICULAR TUBERCULOSIS: HOW OFTEN IS IT MISSED?

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Abstract. This study was carried out to analyze the clinical presentations and outcomes of osteoarticular tuberculosis (OAT) at a university hospital in AlKhobar, Saudi Arabia. A prospective observational study was carried out between 1 January 1998 and 31 December 2007. Patients demographic characteristics were recorded, including age, gender, nationality, clinical manifestation, delay in diagnosis, laboratory results, findings on imaging studies, histological and bacteriological studies of biopsy specimens, treatment modalities, surgical interventions and final outcomes. Fifty-two patients were diagnosed with OAT during the study period. The majority were males (64%), about half were below age 30 years. The mean age at diagnosis was 33 years. There were 32 Saudis (64%), and 18 non-Saudis (36%). Pyrexia, loss of appetite and night sweats were the presenting symptoms in 44, 38 and 36%, respectively. The average time from onset of symptoms to diagnosis was 185 days (7-730 days). On admission, the average erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) was 68 mm/h (4-142). A Mantoux test was performed, in 48 patients the results were positive. The vertebral column was the site of infection in 88% of patients. All patients were managed with standard antituberculous therapy. Forty-two patients (84%) had a favorable outcome.

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