

Title of Paper: Response to treatment with sodium antimony gluconate (SAG) for visceral leishmaniasis in Bangladesh

Method : Oral

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Abstract :About 20 million people are believed to be at risk of visceral leishmaniasis (VL) in Bangladesh with reported incidence of 10,000 cases annually. Until recently, sodium antimony gluconate (SAG) was the only drug available in Bangladesh for treatment of VL. We conducted a clinical study to assess the cure rate in VL patients treated with 28 intramuscular injections of SAG. The diagnosis of VL in all the subjects with clinical features of the disease was confirmed by splenic aspiration followed by parasitological examination. Cure from VL was assessed by clinical examination and splenic aspiration after the end of treatment. All subjects were followed at two and six months after completion of treatment. KATEX in urine and polymerase chain reaction (PCR) in blood were also evaluated in this study as diagnostic tests for VL. Of 148 subjects enrolled into the study with a confirmed diagnosis of VL, 144 patients had complete remission of fever at the end of treatment. Four patients died during treatment with SAG of which three had developed cardiotoxicity. Of 107 patients who completed six months follow up, only two reported a brief episode of fever with spontaneous remission and had no other signs of active disease - all of them were thus considered cured from the disease. All the patients enrolled into the study had a positive rK39 dipstick test as it was one of the screening criteria for enrollment. PCR in blood was positive for VL in 119 of the 148 (80.4%) subjects enrolled into the study. KATEX in urine was positive in 96 of the 148 (64.9%) subjects using frozen specimens analyzed later in the lab. The study will continue until the enrollment of two hundred cases and one hundred healthy controls.