

MEDICAL MORTALITY IN PAKISTAN: EXPERIENCE AT A TERTIARY-CARE HOSPITAL

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OBJECTIVE: To analyze the causes of mortality in Internal Medicine and related specialties at a tertiary care hospital in Pakistan.

METHODS: Mortality cases from January to December 2003 in Medicine and allied specialties were reviewed. Univariate analysis was done for causes of mortality. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to assess the difference in means among different groups.

RESULTS: A total of 10,590 patients were admitted during the study period, among whom 657 died (overall mortality rate 6.2%). Among those who died, mean and median age were 60.27 and 63 years, respectively; males 357 (54.4%) and females 299 (45.6%). Average length of stay was 6.73 days. Deaths were due to septicemia= in 139 (21.2%) cases, respiratory disorders in 113 (17.2 %), malignancy in 103 (15.7 %), cardiovascular diseases in 83 (12.6%), gastrointestinal and liver diseases in 71 (10.8%), neurological disorders in 75 (11.4%), and miscellaneous causes in 11.1%. Septicemia 76.9% (107/139) was the most common specific cause in septicemia-infectious diseases, pneumonia 55.7% (63/113) in respiratory disorders, myocardial infarction 40.9% (34/83) in cardiovascular disorders, intracranial hemorrhage 37.3% (28/75) in neurological diseases, and liver cirrhosis 45.0% (32/71) in gastrointestinal-liver disorders. There were multiple causes in malignant disorders. System-specific mortalities), were cardiovascular in 25 (30.1%) and 58 (69.8%) patients (p=0.001), septicemia-infectious in 70 (50.3%) and 69 (49.7%) patients (p=0.52), gastrointestinal-liver in 47 (66.1%) and 24 (33.8%) patients (p=0.001), respiratory in 35 (30.9%) and 78 (69%) patients (p<0.001), neurological in 38 (50.6%) and 37 (49.3%) patients (p=0.616), and malignant neoplastic in 64 (62.1%) and 39 (37.8%) patients (p=0.002) below and above the median age (63 years), respectively.

CONCLUSION: We witnessed a significant number of deaths due to septicemia at our institution. The patients were relatively young, and those who died of cardiovascular and respiratory causes were older than those who died of gastrointestinal-liver, septicemia-infectious, neurological and malignant disorders. The overall mortality rate was comparable to that in some of the Western mortality studies.

Keyword: Medical mortality, mortality rate, causes of mortality