Human Bird Flu Infection: Is There Any Relationship to Hypertension?

To the Editor:

Bird flu or avian flu, caused by H5N1 virus, is a new emerging infectious disease. In 2004, it became a new emerging infectious disease with high mortality in humans in Vietnam and Thailand. Most infected cases usually developed progressive pneumonia with acute respiratory distress syndrome and consequently died. Here, the author performed this mini-study to document if hypertension was a clinical manifestation among reported Thai and Vietnamese patients. A literature review of the papers concerning human bird flu in Thailand and Vietnam was performed from the database of the published works cited in the Index Medicus and Science Citation Index and also on the published works in all 256 local Thai journals, which are not included in the international citation index. The reports that contained no complete data were excluded for further analysis.

According to this review, there were 7 reports covering 22 Thai and Vietnamese patients with a definitive diagnosis of bird flu. Of interest, there is no case with hypertension as a presentation. Indeed, there are some previous reports stating that hypertension is a clinical manifestation in the patients suffering from severe influenza infection.1,2 It is shown that patients with influenza had main functional circulatory disorders in microcirculation zone and this might be related to hypertension.3 However, there is no report on this finding in human avian influenza infection. According to this study, it can be implied that hypertension might not be an important manifestation of human bird flu infection.

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