

Summary

Helicobacter pylori is now widely accepted as the aetiological agent of active chronic gastritis and a very important factor in the pathogenesis of peptic ulceration, gastric carcinoma and gastric lymphoma. Helicobacter pylori is a Gram negative curved or gently spiral bacilli which colonizes gastric tissue only. It is a very powerful urease producer therefore the presence of urease enzyme in the gastric tissue is a very good indicator of H.pylori infection.

This study was undertaken to find out the incidence of Helicobacter pylori in Sri Lankan patients with peptic ulcer disease.

Antral biopsy specimens of 100 consecutive patients who underwent diagnostic endoscopy at the National Hospital of Sri Lanka during the period between February 1995 to June 1996 were studied. The age distribution was from 18 years - 80 years. There were 61 males and 39 females. The biopsy specimens were subjected to Gram stain, urease test and culture.

Out of the 100 samples tested 12 were found to be positive for H.pylori infection. There were 10 urease positives, 5 Gram stain positive and one culture positive. The culture positive one gave positive results with both urease and Gram stain. Two samples gave positive results with both urease and Gram stain. The positivity rate of different clinical groups were as follows. 60% in duodenal ulcer, 30% in gastric ulcer, 7.9% in gastritis and 7.7% in non ulcer dyspepsia group. There was no statistically significant increase of infection among smokers and uses of NSAID. The level of income was not associated with the incidence.

These findings suggest that the incidence of H.pylori infection is low in Sri Lankan patients with peptic ulcer disease. As the sensitivity of the culture is very low a combination of direct urease test and the Gram stain smear of biopsy tissue are useful simple screening tests for the detection of the H.pylori infection.