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URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS IN THE ELDERLY POPULATION number: Over the last two decades, Urinary tract infections (UTIs) have been a common problem in the health sector. However, the most infected group is the elderly population above 50 years. The spectrum of UTIs significantly varies from cystitis to life-threatening pyelonephritis. Though UTI is a general infection associated with kids, it is also affects the rest of the population, especially the elderly. As compared to adults, children below 5 years are least affected by the UTIs with only 1 percent of them suffering from the infection. In the general population, females are most prone to UTIs than the males. The question is why women than men? This is explained biologically by the fact that female urethra is relatively shorter and more close to the anus than the males. The risk of UTI among women increases with age due to the lost of vaginal flora during menopause when the level of estrogen falls, thus loss of virginal protection (Pooler, 2011, p. 67).

Population and Comparative

Women are more likely to get infected by the UTIs than men since the bacteria easily reach their bladder because of the shortest distance the bacteria has to travel in the urethra. Besides, the location of the urethra near the rectum makes it easier for the bacteria from the anus to travel to the urethra causing infections. Sexual intercourse with the males increases the risk of UTIs among women as more bacteria are pushed into their urethra. Kidney UTIs are more common among expectant women as the pregnancy causes a lot of pressure to the ureters, thus causing hormonal changes (Foster, 2008, p. 241).

Outcome

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are bacterial infections which mainly affects the urinary tract systems of both sexes. The infection that occurs at the lower urinary tract parts is referred to as the cystitis; a bladder infection. On the other hand, the UTIs which only attack the upper urinary systems is popularly referred to as pyelonephritis, a kidney infection (Pooler, 2011, p. 45). About 80-85% of the UTIs are caused by E. coli while Staphylococcus saprophyticus only causes 7% infections.

The urinary tract organs which are most affected by this bacterial infection are urethra, kidney, bladder, and ureters. Though all parts of the urinary tract can be infected by UTIs, the urethra and bladder are the most commonly infected. The common symptoms and signs of UTIs are frequent urination and burns during urination. Other symptoms which are mainly common among the elderly population are: fatigue, blood infections, and change in mental status (Foster, 2008, p. 242).

Intervention

Prevention of the UTIs is more of a change in the personal hygiene than medical. For the risk prone population (women), continuous wiping of the private parts is the key prevention device. Women should consider washing their private parts immediately after every sexual intercourse. Frequent urination is a much needed prevention step as it reduces the chance of bacterial replication within the urinary tract. Another preventive mechanism is drinking a lot of fluids and water to ensure that your urinary tract and bladder are always clean. In addition, constant flashing of the urinary bladder is a significant step in prevention as it helps in flushing out bacteria from the tract systems (Pooler, 2011, p. 78-9). Finally, it is recommended for

sexual partners to take antibiotic pills after every sexual intercourse to reduce the chance of getting infected by the UTIs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, improved management and diagnosis of UTIs is necessary especially for the most vulnerable population; the elderly. Advanced techniques for evaluating and preventing UTIs and catheter-associated bacteriuria should be advanced to reduce the rate of infection in the general population. Alternative treatment and preventive approaches for prophylaxis patients suffering from recurrent UTIs must be advanced while reducing the risk of propagating antibiotic resistance.

Bibliography

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