Clinico-Bacteriological Study of Chronic Dacryocystitis Cases in Northern Karnataka, India

ABSTRACT
Aims and objectives: The aim of this study was to identify the organisms responsible and to determine the antibiotic susceptibility pattern of the bacterial isolates from conjunctiva and nasal mucosa in cases of chronic dacryocystitis and comparing with lacrimal sac specimen.

Design: Prospective longitudinal study.

Methods: A prospective analysis of 44 lacrimal sac contents of patients with chronic dacryocystitis conducted during the period from April 2012 to March 2013. Material was obtained directly from the lacrimal sac while making sac flap during external dacryocystorhinostomy for chronic dacryocystitis. Samples were also collected from ipsilateral conjunctiva and inferior meatus of nose. The specimens were cultured and results analyzed.

Statistical Analysis: The results were analyzed by using Chi-square ($\chi^2$) test.

INTRODUCTION
Chronic dacryocystitis is an inflammatory condition of the lacrimal sac commonly associated with partial and total obstruction of the nasolacrimal duct, which affects patients of middle age. Several bacteria have been implicated as causative agents of chronic dacryocystitis [1]. Also, there is a change in the agents responsible for chronic dacryocystitis over the time [2,3]. Knowledge of the microbial organisms responsible for chronic dacryocystitis in a particular geographical area is essential in choosing the appropriate antibiotics [4]. Hence we aimed at finding out the bacteria responsible for lacrimal sac infections in the patients visiting this tertiary care teaching institute in northern Karnataka during the period April 2012 to March 2013. The specimens received at the laboratory were inoculated immediately on MacConkey agar, materials were collected with sterile cotton swabs and sent for culture to the microbiology laboratory. The specimens received at the laboratory were inoculated immediately on MacConkey agar, chocolate agar and thioglycollate broth. Organisms grown were identified using standard biochemical reactions and antibiotic sensitivity test was done by the Kirby-Bauer disc diffusion method as per the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute guidelines [5,6]. Chi-square ($\chi^2$) distribution was used to test the qualitative distribution. A p (predictive) value of <0.05 was considered indicative of significant association between the variables which were tested.

MATERIAL AND METHODS
A total of 44 samples from 43 cases of chronic dacryocystitis, who attended the ophthalmology outpatient department of a tertiary care teaching institute in northern Karnataka during the period April 2012 to March 2013, formed the subject of study. One patient had bilateral chronic dacryocystitis.

Inclusion criteria: Clinically diagnosed cases of chronic dacryocystitis undergoing external dacryocystorhinostomy (Ext-DCR) were included in the study.

Exclusion criteria: The patients who had received either topical or systemic antibiotics in the past one week during their visit to the hospital were excluded.

The study was carried out in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki and institutional ethical committee approval was obtained before the commencement of the study. An informed consent was obtained from all the patients. Clinically diagnosed cases of chronic dacryocystitis were operated for Ext-DCR after relevant investigations. Samples were collected directly from lacrimal sac during Ext-DCR. Preoperative nasal swab and conjunctival swab from the same side were also collected. The materials were collected with sterile cotton swabs and sent for culture to the microbiology laboratory. The specimens received at the laboratory were inoculated immediately on MacConkey agar, chocolate agar and thioglycollate broth. Organisms grown were identified using standard biochemical reactions and antibiotic sensitivity test was done by the Kirby-Bauer disc diffusion method as per the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute guidelines [5,6]. Chi-square ($\chi^2$) distribution was used to test the qualitative distribution. A p (predictive) value of <0.05 was considered indicative of significant association between the variables which were tested.

RESULTS
Total of 43 adult patients were included in the study; (15 males and 28 females) [Table/Fig-1]. The bacterial pathogens grown from lacrimal sac, nasal and conjunctiva have been shown in [Table/Fig-2]. All the specimens yielded monomicrobial growth except one lacrimal sac specimen that yielded two pathogens.

In eight nasal and two conjunctival specimens organism identical to the lacrimal sac specimen was recovered.

A total of 21 isolates were recovered from 44 lacrimal sac specimens. The Gram positive bacteria (18/21; 85%) outnumbered the Gram negative bacteria i.e., Coagulase negative staphylococci and Staphylococcus aureus were the most common isolates (71% and 14% respectively). Vancomycin, amikacin, 3rd generation cephalosporins and amoxyclav were most sensitive antibiotics (100%, 89%, 83%, and 78% respectively). Comparison between lacrimal and nasal/conjunctival isolates showed high degree of identicalness between the isolates of two sites (p< 0.05).

Conclusion: Majority of the chronic dacryocystitis cases are caused by Coagulase negative Staphylococci and Staphylococcus aureus. Amoxyclav and 3rd generation cephalosporins can be used to treat chronic dacryocystitis. Commensal flora of nose and conjunctiva have a direct role in pathogenesis of chronic dacryocystitis.

Keywords: Cephalosporins, Chronic dacryocystitis, Coagulase negative Staphylococcus, Nasolacrimal duct

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Age Group | No. of Cases
--- | ---
21-30 | 3
31-40 | 3
41-50 | 12
51-60 | 14
61-70 | 10
71-80 | 1

**[Table/Fig-1]:** Age wise distribution of cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>No Growth</th>
<th>% No Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lacrimal</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctival</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**[Table/Fig-2]:** Results of culture of nasal, conjunctival and lacrimal specimens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antibiotic</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% S</th>
<th>% R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amoxicillin</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amikacin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceftriaxime</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cefotaxime</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cefazidime</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cefixime</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ciprofloxacin</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clindamycin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-trimoxazole</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erythromycin</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentamicin</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imipenem</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penicillin G</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piperacillin- Tazobactam</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancomycin</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**[Table/Fig-3]:** Antibiogram of CONS and Staphylococcus aureus

DISCUSSION

Chronic dacryocystitis is a commonly encountered but commonly mismanaged infection. It is more common in the age group above 30 years. Lacrimal apparatus contains lacrimal gland, punctum, canaliculi, lacrimal sac and nasolacrimal duct. Lacrimal apparatus is concerned with formation and draining of tears, which keep the cornea moist, protects against airborne pathogens and foreign bodies. Obstruction of the nasolacrimal duct results in stasis with accumulation of tears, desquamated cells and mucous secretions above the obstruction and creates a fertile environment for secondary bacterial infection.

In the present study, specimens were obtained directly from the lacrimal sac under the operating microscope while making the sac flap for Ext-DCR, which gives less chance for collection contamination compared to collection by applying pressure over the lacrimal sac or by allowing the purulent material to reflex through the lacrimal sac [1].

In pre-antibiotic era, Streptococci were very common causative agents of chronic dacryocystitis. However, after the discovery of effective antibiotics like penicillin and cephalosporins, Streptococci have been replaced by Staphylococci; notoriously known to acquire drug resistance [2,3]. Previous studies state that pathogens implicated in chronic dacryocystitis are mostly Gram positive bacteria like CONS, *Staphylococcus aureus* and Streptococci [7]. Some studies have also reported Gram negative bacteria like *Pseudomonas, Enterobacter, Citrobacter species* [2]. Environmental factors in different geographical regions may also have a role in determining the microbial pattern of chronic dacryocystitis [8].

In our study, we noted female preponderance (63.6%) which was also noticed in other studies 80.9% [7] and 61.04% [9]. All the patients were in the age group of 30 and above. Similar findings were reported in other articles [1, 7].

We isolated 15 CONS (71%) and three *Staphylococcus aureus* (14%) species. Many Indian studies have reported growth of Gram positive bacteria more frequently than Gram negative bacteria [7, 9,10–13]. CONS hitherto were considered as non-virulent or low grade pathogens. However, more evidence suggesting pathogenic potential of CONS is now coming forward [14]. However, we did not encounter any Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. All the patients were admitted to the hospital one day prior to surgery. Thus the flora of the patients was community acquired and not hospital acquired.

Out of 44 cases, same organism with same antibiotic pattern had been isolated in both lacrimal sac and nasal specimen in eight cases. In two cases lacrimal and conjunctival samples showed similar pattern. This is probably because lacrimal apparatus is contiguous with nasal and conjunctival mucosal surfaces. Normal flora from these two sites often enter into the lacrimal apparatus. Usually any small number of bacteria gaining entry into the lacrimal sac will be washed away by the flow of tears. When there is obstruction to the flow of the tears, then these bacteria will not be flushed and will get very good environment for the growth. Common normal flora of the conjunctiva and nasal cavity are CONS and *Staphylococcus aureus* respectively [15]. Hence these are the most common pathogens implicated as etiological agents of chronic dacryocystitis. After statistical analysis of the growth from lacrimal, nasal and conjunctival specimens, we found that there was a significant identicalness between lacrimal and nasal/conjunctival isolates. The statistical analysis pointed that lacrimal pathogens might have arisen from nose/conjunctiva. Bale et al., reported 50% correlation between lacrimal and nasal pathogens [10].The identicalness of the isolates has been determined by matching the antibiogram. Though this is not a confirmatory method to type the bacterial species it is an easy and fairly reliable technique for preliminary comparison of the isolates [5]. Use of modern molecular methods like restriction fragment length polymorphism can provide precise matching of the isolates [15].

Vancomycin, amikacin, 3rd generation cephalosporins and amoxycillin were most effective antibiotics against the Gram positive isolates (100%, 89%, 83% and 78% sensitivity respectively). Penicillin and erythromycin are the commonly used agents against Gram positive pathogens. However, penicillin (72% resistance) and erythromycin (75% resistance) were the least reliable antibiotics among antibiotics tested. Vancomycin and amikacin being parenteral drugs can be reserved for severe cases. Amoxycillin and 3rd generation cephalosporins can be used as first line of antibiotics in the management of chronic dacryocystitis.
It must be noted that in our study, culture for aerobic organisms only was attempted. We did not do anaerobic culture of the specimens. Inclusion of anaerobic culture would be certainly a useful aid in similar studies. Inclusion of large sample size would have given us a better picture.

CONCLUSION

Organisms responsible for majority of the chronic dacryocystitis cases are CONS and Staphylococcus aureus. Amoxyclav and 3rd generation cephalosporins can be used to treat chronic dacryocystitis cases. Organisms from nose and conjunctiva have direct role in pathogenesis of chronic dacryocystitis. Use of modern molecular methods for typing the isolates can provide a better picture of the scenario.

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REFERENCES


PARTICULARS OF CONTRIBUTORS:

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Ophthalmology, Sri Dharma Sthala Manjunatheshwara College of Medical Sciences & Hospital, Sattur, Dharwad, Karnataka, India.
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Medical Microbiology, Sri Dharma Sthala Manjunatheshwara College of Medical Sciences & Hospital, Sattur, Dharwad, Karnataka, India.
3. Lecturer, Department of Ophthalmology, Sri Dharma Sthala Manjunatheshwara College of Medical Sciences & Hospital, Sattur, Dharwad, Karnataka, India.
4. Professor, Department of ENT, Sri Dharma Sthala Manjunatheshwara College of Medical Sciences & Hospital, Sattur, Dharwad, Karnataka, India.
5. Assistant Professor, Department of ENT, Sri Dharma Sthala Manjunatheshwara College of Medical Sciences & Hospital, Sattur, Dharwad, Karnataka, India.
6. Assistant Professor, Department of ENT, Sri Dharma Sthala Manjunatheshwara College of Medical Sciences & Hospital, Sattur, Dharwad, Karnataka, India.

NAME, ADDRESS, E-MAIL ID OF THE CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Dr. Pradeep A.V.,
Assistant Professor, Department of Ophthalmology, Sri Dharma Sthala Manjunatheshwara College of Medical Sciences & Hospital, Sattur, Dharwad, Karnataka, India.
Phone: 919916915716, E-mail: dravpradeep@gmail.com

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