

Pattern of acute pancreatitis

Sir,

I am writing with reference to the article "Pattern of acute pancreatitis" by Dr. Abu-Eshy.¹ The author has conducted a very well designed and analyzed study; his conclusion of the need to modify criteria for acute pancreatitis in our setting is indeed practical and I suggest that a nationwide study should be launched by a group from across the Kingdom to address the subject. The discussion did not suggest any reason for a statistically significant variable of season (52% of cases in cold season with 11% complication), does it have an indirect relation to diet or any other indirect factor? They also did not comment on the size of the gallstones in relation to the severity of attacks or the complications: it is known that small stones cause acute pancreatitis more than big ones, and it would be nice to know if complications are also common or not with small stones.

Finally the fact that 1.4% of attacks is due to alcohol sounds an alarm indicating that a new etiological factor which was virtually unknown is slowly coming to our hospitals, a fact which needs to be addressed with all seriousness before it becomes a nightmare as smoking did. My comments by no means adds a negative score to the excellent paper; rather they are a trial to make it perfect.

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Reply from the Author

Sir,

Firstly I would like to thank Dr. Bakhotmah for his comments on the paper. In response to his enquiry about the association between the size of the stones both with the incidence of acute pancreatitis and complications, unfortunately, I did not investigate this correlation deeply so I can't comment scientifically on that issue as far as the study is concerned. The association between cold season and the attacks of pancreatitis and complications are found in the study. However, the exact etiological correlation for this is not clear although I believe that the high viscosity of the blood in high altitude in our cold region may have contributed to the pancreatitis by affecting the blood supply of the pancreas causing ischemic changes, but this remains hypothetical and needs to be proven. A study in our hospital is going to be sent for publication shortly concerning a new modification of Ranson's Criteria suiting our setting.

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References

1. Abu-Eshy SA. Pattern of acute pancreatitis. Saudi Med J 2001; 22: 215-218.