Respiratory Medicine Case Reports 12 (2014) 30–33

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Respiratory Medicine Case Reports

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/rmcr

Case report

Community-acquired, hospital-acquired, and healthcare-associated pneumonia caused by *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*

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Keywords:
Lung abscess
Drug resistance
Respiratory infection
Nosocomial pathogen

A B S T R A C T

We describe three types of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* pneumonia.

Case 1. *P. aeruginosa* was isolated from the blood and sputum of a 29-year-old male non-smoker who developed severe community-acquired pneumonia (CAP). Piperacillin was initially effective, but fever and lobular pneumonia with cavities developed seven days after discharge. Intravenous piperacillin/tazobactam and tobramycin were administered for four weeks, followed by oral ciprofloxacin for two weeks. He finally recovered, but developed recurrent CAP due to *P. aeruginosa* despite appropriate antibiotic therapy and immunocompetent status.

Case 2. *P. aeruginosa* was isolated from the blood and sputum of a 57-year-old woman with renal cancer who developed hospital-acquired pneumonia (HAP) after surgical treatment. She recovered after meropenem administration for four weeks.

Case 3. A 67-year-old woman with systemic sclerosis and malignant lymphoma who was followed up on an outpatient basis underwent immunosuppressive therapy. Thereafter, she developed pneumonia and was admitted to our institution where *P aeruginosa* was isolated from blood and sputum samples. Healthcare-associated pneumonia (HCAP) was diagnosed and effectively treated with tobramycin and ciprofloxacin.

P. aeruginosa is not only a causative pathogen of HAP and HCAP, but possibly also of CAP.

Introduction

Pseudomonas aeruginosa is a common nosocomial pathogen that often causes pneumonia in hospitalized patients [1,2], most of whom have underlying medical conditions or risk factors for *Pseudomonas* infection. Although rare, case reports and reviews have described healthy individuals who have developed community-acquired pneumonia (CAP) caused by *P. aeruginosa* [3–8] that is often rapidly progressive and fatal.

Here, we compared hospital-acquired (HAP) and healthcare-associated (HCAP) pneumonia caused by *P. aeruginosa*, with rapidly progressive *P. aeruginosa* CAP in a previously healthy 29-year-old man.

Case report

Case 1

A previously healthy 29-year-old man presented at the emergency room in June 2012 with acute pain around the right shoulder and high fever accompanied by extreme fatigue that had persisted for nine days. He had a medical history of mild sinusitis, but had never smoked.

A physical examination indicated the following: temperature, 39.5 °C; blood pressure, 111/50 mmHg and a respiratory rate of 28 breaths/min. A physical examination revealed crackles (rhonchi) at the upper right lung and chest radiography indicated bilateral opacities (Fig. 1(A) and (B)). His initial WBC count was 26,400/L, and C-reactive protein (CRP) was 20.0 mg/dL. *P. aeruginosa* was identified in blood cultures and respiratory specimens and the minimum

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.rmcr.2014.03.002

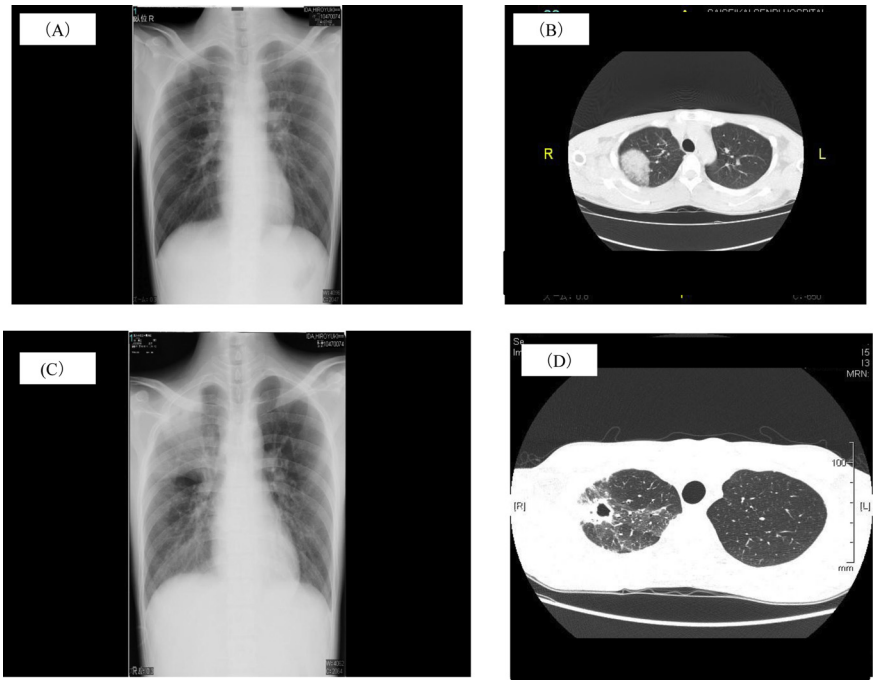

Fig. 1. Chest radiography and computed tomography images of a 29-year-old patient admitted with CAP in June 2012 and August 2012. Chest radiography and computed tomography images in June 2012 (A and B, respectively) show patchy airspace opacity in right upper lung lobe. Those acquired in August 2012 (C and D, respectively) show right upper lobular pneumonia with cavity.

inhibitory concentration (MIC) test according to Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute criteria revealed susceptibility to levofloxacin, piperacillin, ciprofloxacin and gentamicin. Rapid antigen tests for influenza A and B virus were negative. Intravenous piperacillin (4 × 3 g/day) for 19 days improved the chest X-ray findings and the inflammatory markers, WBC (8900/L) and CRP (0.9 mg/dL). Blood cultures also became negative. He was discharged from hospital after completing the course of treatment.

However, he returned to the hospital two days later with high fever. Chest radiography and CT revealed lobular pneumonia with cavities and *P. aeruginosa* that was susceptible to most of the same antibiotics as before was isolated from sputum once again. The WBC count and CRP concentration at this point were 10,800/L and 11.6 mg/dL, respectively. Oral levofloxacin (500 mg/day) for one week improved chest radiography findings, WBC (7500/L) and CRP (2.8 mg/dL).

One month thereafter, a chest X-ray and CT during August 2012 revealed worsened infiltration shadows around cavities (Fig. 1(C) and (D)). Therefore, he was admitted for a third time, and treated with intravenous piperacillin/tazobactam (3 × 4.5 g/day) and tobramycin (300 mg/day) for four weeks followed by 300 mg/day of oral ciprofloxacin for two weeks. The patient has since remained free of further recurrence.

Case 2

A 57-year-old woman with current renal cancer and a history of smoking developed pneumonia seven days after a nephrectomy in October 2012.

A physical examination revealed a temperature of 37.1 °C, blood pressure of 120/80 mmHg and crackles (rhonchi) in the left lung. Chest radiography indicated infiltration shadows in the left lung field (Fig. 2(A) and (B)). Her initial WBC count was 720/L because she was under chemotherapy, and CRP was 16.4 mg/dL. *P. aeruginosa* determined in blood cultures and respiratory specimens was susceptible to meropenem, ciprofloxacin and gentamicin but resistant to piperacillin. Intravenous meropenem (3 × 1 g/day) for 14 days followed by cefepime (3 × 1 g/day) for 10 days improved the chest X-ray findings and the pneumonia.

Case 3

A 67-year-old woman with systemic sclerosis and malignant lymphoma was admitted to the emergency room in March 2013 with dyspnea and disturbed consciousness. She was followed up as an outpatient, and had recently been treated with rituximab and oral prednisolone.

A physical examination indicated a temperature of 39.1 °C and blood pressure of 88/56 mmHg. A physical examination revealed crackles (rhonchi) at the left lung. Chest radiography indicated infiltration shadows mainly in the left lower field (Fig. 2(C) and (D)). Saturated pulse oxygen was 90% under an O_2 10 L/min mask and the patient was therefore placed on a respirator. Her initial WBC count was 4900/L, and CRP was 27.8 mg/dL. *P. aeruginosa* determined in blood cultures and respiratory specimens was susceptible to levofloxacin, piperacillin, ciprofloxacin and gentamicin. Intravenous piperacillin/tazobactam (3 × 4.5 g/day) improved her status after 17 days.

Discussion

P. aeruginosa is an established causative pathogen of HAP and HCA P [1], but CAP caused by this organism in previously healthy individuals is rare. However, over ten occurrences of CAP have been documented [3,8]. Rose [8] described chronic pneumonia due to *P. aeruginosa* that developed in a 43-year-old man who had been previously considered healthy, in contrast to the HAP and HCAP caused by *P. aeruginosa* that develops in patients and which might