

Microbiology, Clinical Spectrum and Outcome of Peritonitis in Patients Undergoing Peritoneal Dialysis in India: Results from a Multicentric, Observational Study

Georgi Abraham, Amit Gupta¹, Kashi Nath Prasad², Anusha Rohit³, Anil Kumar Bhalla⁴, Vishwanath Billa⁵, Rajasekhar Chakravati⁶, Tonmoy Das⁷, Thadakanathan Dhinakaran⁸, Arup Ratan Dutta⁹, Padmanabhan Giri¹⁰, Gokulnath¹¹, Tarun Jeloka¹², Sampath Kumar¹³, Ajay Marwaha¹⁴, Radha Vijay Raghavan¹⁵, Rajan Ravichandran¹⁶, Roshan Rohit¹⁷, Chandra Nath Sarkar⁸, Naorem Sharat Kumar Singh¹⁸

Departments of Nephrology and ³Microbiology, Madras Medical Mission, ¹⁵Department of Nephrology, Southern Railway Hospital, ¹⁶Department of Nephrology, MIOT International, Chennai, ⁸Department of Nephrology, Madurai Kidney Center and Transplantation Research Center, ¹³Department of Nephrology, Meenakshi Mission Hospital and Research Center, Madurai, ¹⁰Department of Nephrology, Renal Care Hospital, Trichy, Tamil Nadu, Departments of ¹Nephrology and ²Microbiology, Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, ⁴Department of Nephrology, Sir Gangaram Hospital, New Delhi, ⁵Department of Nephrology, Apcc Kidney Care, Mumbai, ¹²Department of Nephrology, Aditya Birla Memorial Hospital, Pune, Maharashtra, ⁶Department of Nephrology, Care Hospital, Hyderabad, Telangana, ⁷Department of Nephrology, International Hospital, Guwahati, Assam, ⁹Department of Nephrology, Fortis Hospital and Kidney Institute, Kolkata, West Bengal, ¹¹Department of Nephrology, St John's Medical College Hospital, Bengaluru, Karnataka, ¹⁴Department of Nephrology, Kidney Hospital, Jalandhar, Punjab, ¹⁸Department of Nephrology, Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal, Manipur, India, ¹⁷Department of Medical Research and Medical Affairs-Industry, Baxter India Pvt. Ltd.

Abstract

Background: Peritoneal dialysis (PD)-related peritonitis is a major risk factor for drop out of patients on continuous ambulatory PD (CAPD) and automated PD (APD). Factors affecting PD-related peritonitis and centre-specific microbiological data are lacking in India. A multicentric prospective observational study was designed to overcome the gaps in the existing data regarding causative organism and outcome. **Methodology:** The present study was a prospective, uncontrolled, open-label, observational study conducted in 21 centres representing all the four geographical regions (North, South, East and West) of India between April 2010 and December 2011. **Results:** A total of 244 patients on chronic PD with peritonitis were enrolled in the study (CAPD and APD), who met the inclusion criteria, from 21 centres covering the different geographical areas of India. Amongst the 85 samples that were culture positive, 38 (44.7%) were in the monsoon season followed by 23 (27.1%) in the post-monsoon, 18 (21.2%) during winter and 11 (12.9%) during summer. Maximum culture positivity (72.7%) was observed with automated culture technique. Microorganisms could be isolated in only 85 cases (35.3%) while the remaining samples were culture negative (156/241, 64.7% of samples). Organisms isolated were Gram-negative in 47.8%, Gram-positive in 36.7%, fungal in 13.3% and *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in 2.2%. **Conclusion:** This large multicentre study of peritonitis offers insights into the aetiology and outcomes of infectious complications of chronic PD in India that are germane to clinical decision-making.

Keywords: Causative organisms, peritonitis, seasonal variation

INTRODUCTION

In India, it is estimated that approximately 150 per million population develop the end-stage renal disease (ESRD) each year which puts an enormous burden on the healthcare system of the country.^[1] Further studies showed that approximately 90% of patients with ESRD in South Asia die within months of diagnosis due to inadequate treatment.^[2]

Chronic peritoneal dialysis (PD) is practiced widely in India with a penetration rate of 20%–29%.^[2] PD can be the choice of

therapy in different geographical regions of the country where there is even lack of power supply and access to nephrologists is also limited.^[3] PD has been advancing in terms of technique, new exchange systems and a new generation of solutions.^[4] Despite

Address for correspondence: Dr. Georgi Abraham, 4-A, Dr. J J Nagar, Mogappair, Chennai - 600 037, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: abraham_georgi@yahoo.com

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these advantages, infective complications including peritonitis (about 0.3–0.5 episodes per patient per year) remain a major cause of drop out from PD programmes. PD peritonitis is also a common cause of catheter loss and transfer to haemodialysis (HD).^[5]

Multiple factors such as socio-demographic, climate change, diabetes mellitus, PD modality and the presence of peritoneal catheter tunnel infection or exit site infection are risk factors associated with the development of peritonitis. However, early diagnosis and prompt initiation of therapy for peritonitis are critical, and can prevent adverse outcomes.^[6] For an appropriate management, it is also important to identify the microorganisms that are responsible for peritonitis.^[7,8] Hence, the recent focus has been shifting from lowering peritonitis rates to the improvement of peritonitis outcome.^[7-9]

Existing Indian evidence is limited to mostly being single-centred studies. There is a paucity of data to guide appropriate and evidence-based therapeutic choices. Hence, considering the need of a large, multi-centre epidemiological data on the prevention and management of PD-related peritonitis in India, the present prospective study was envisaged as the largest nationwide observational study.

METHODOLOGY

Study design and objectives

The present study was an open-label, prospective, observational study conducted in 21 centres representing all the four geographical regions (North, South, East and West) of India, from April 2010 to December 2011. The study was approved by Independent Ethics Committee and written informed consent was obtained from all the study participants. The primary objective was to describe the epidemiology of aetiological organisms, including the incidence and distribution of culture-negative peritonitis. Secondary objectives included the assessment of clinical course and demographic risk factors, evaluation of techniques for isolation and identification of microorganism, antibiotic sensitivity of isolates, treatment protocols and peritonitis outcomes.

Sample size determination

Sample size calculation was based on a previous Indian study, in which Gram-negative, Gram-positive, polymicrobial and fungal peritonitis were found to be 42.45%, 28.30%, 10.38% and 18.87%, respectively.^[10] Weighted percentage peritonitis of 30.67% was calculated. Based on the anticipated peritonitis of 30.67%, 95% of confidence level and 7% margin of absolute error, a sample of 168 episodes of peritonitis were calculated. To compensate for variations between and within centres, the calculated sample was multiplied by a factor of two (design effect), giving the revised sample size of 336. Considering the dropout rate of 20%, sample size was finally adopted as 400 episodes of peritonitis.

Study population

Inclusion criteria

The present study included patients who have been diagnosed to have peritonitis following PD. PD peritonitis was defined

as the presence of two of the three ISPD 2010 peritonitis diagnostic criteria.^[8]

Exclusion criteria

Patients with a history of peritonitis in the past 1 month or those who received antibiotics within 7 days before enrollment (without an exit site infection) or concurrent the presence of any malignancy or on immunosuppressants (except topical steroid) were excluded from the study.

Study procedure

Eligible participants were recruited, and the following information was collected at baseline.

1. Demographic
2. Clinical characteristics
3. Type of peritonitis
4. Time taken for developing the current peritonitis
5. Catheter implantation technique,
6. Pre- and post-catheter exit site care protocol
7. Break-in period
8. Type of dialysis solution (glucose and non-glucose-based)
9. Visual analogue scale (vas) from 0 to 10 (in case of abdominal pain)
10. Laboratory data (cell count and differential count of dialysate effluent, Gram-stain, culture and sensitivity of dialysate effluent, complete blood count and serum albumin) was recorded at baseline.
11. Variation as per seasons (Winter – December to February; Summer – March to May; Monsoon – June to September; Post-monsoon – October and November) of the episodes were also assessed.

Follow-up visits, data collection, treatment

Empirical antibiotics were started as per centre specific protocols and were thereafter revised based on culture sensitivity reports. All the study participants were followed up on day 3 ± 1 (visit 2), 5 ± 1 (visit 3), 7 ± 1 (visit 4), 14 ± 2 (visit 5) and 45 ± 7 (visit 6). All the above-mentioned information except for microbiological investigations were collected at all these time points. Based on investigator discretion, a repeat culture was also done at visit 5. Peritonitis related deaths in the present study were defined as death due to sepsis, death occurring with a positive PD culture, death within 14 days after onset of peritonitis or death occurring during hospitalisation for any patient admitted with peritonitis.^[10]

Culture techniques

Being an observational study, no particular culture method was made mandatory, although all the study centres were advised to use the methods recommended in ISPD 2010 guidelines.^[8] Both conventional (agar and broth method) and automated culture methods (e.g., BACTEC, Septi-Chek, BacT/Alert) were permitted due to limitations of cost and resources at different centres. Automated methods are blood culture systems which process test samples and analyse results to data, and generate an interpretation using computing programmes. The conventional method involved manual inoculation and enrichment step followed by plating with

selective media. Before and during the study, meetings and training programmes were conducted to spread the awareness of proper culture techniques across the participating centres to optimise the chances of successful isolation and identification of aetiological microorganisms.

Statistical analysis

The frequency distribution of some quantitative variables such as age, height, body mass index and socio-economic status was classified into different class-intervals. The qualitative variables such as education, employment, marital status, gender, hygiene, geographical location, source of water and co-morbidity were expressed with regard to percentage. Percentage of peritonitis caused by Gram-positive, Gram-negative organisms, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, fungus and of culture negative peritonitis were estimated. All the quantitative variables were assessed for normality and accordingly Student's *t*-test was employed. The categorical variables were represented in proportions and analysed using Chi-square test after checking for assumptions. The value of $P < 0.05$ was considered as statistically significant for all the statistical tests.

RESULTS

Demographic data

A total of 244 patients with peritonitis were enrolled in the study. The mean (standard deviation) age (years) was 54.30 (13.1) and body mass index (kg/m²) of the study participants was 23.15 (4.5), respectively. The median (range) duration (years) of ESRD was 2.75 (0.05–18.87) and that of peritoneal catheterisation was 1.26 (0.03–15.62), respectively. A total of 61 (25%) participants were new to PD and 177 (72.5%) had undergone a previous HD, while 6 (2.5%) had a failed previous kidney transplant. Of the 244 participants, 239 (98%) were on continuous ambulatory PD mode with a median (range) duration (months) of 15.76 (0.4–187.3) and only 5 (2%) were on automated PD with a median duration (months) of 7.13 (4.7–12.3). Table 1 summarises the demographic characteristics of the study participants.

Reviewing the clinical consideration and presence of co-morbidity disease, a total of 106 (43.4%) patients had diabetic nephropathy, 96 (39.3%) had hypertensive nephropathy. The remaining 42 (17.3%) had underlying chronic glomerulonephritis, chronic interstitial nephritis, obstructive nephropathy, toxic nephropathy, polycystic kidney disease and renovascular disease.

Peritoneal dialysis catheterisation

Pre-catheter insertion and exit site preparation was performed in 237 (97.1%) patients. Tenckhoff swan neck double cuff catheters and straight catheters were used in 158 (64.8%) and 86 (35.2%) patients, respectively. The twin bag disconnected system was used in 239 (98%) patients. Post-catheterisation, topical antibiotics (mupirocin 98.1% and povidone-iodine 1.9%) was used in 213 (87.3%) patients at exit site. The median duration (days) of peritoneal rest before utilisation was

Table 1: Attributes of the patients undergoing peritoneal dialysis (n=244)

Variables	Attributes	Frequency, n (%)	
Gender distribution	Male	160 (65.6)	
	Female	84 (34.4)	
Age (years)	<40	28 (11.5)	
	40-60	148 (60.7)	
	>60	68 (27.9)	
Educational status	No formal education	27 (11.1)	
	Primary school	56 (23.0)	
	High school	70 (28.7)	
	College and above	91 (37.3)	
Distance of residence from clinic	Same city	135 (55.3)	
	Outside city	109 (44.7)	
Location	Rural	72 (29.5)	
	Urban	172 (70.5)	
Personal hygiene	Daily bath	225 (92.2)	
	Hand wash before and after food	231 (94.7)	
	Hand wash after defecation	237 (97.1)	
	Hand wash after urination	186 (76.2)	
	Clean clothes	229 (93.9)	
Toilet habits	Open field defecation	1 (0.4)	
	Sanitary toilets	243 (99.6)	
	Water source	Tap water	213 (87.3)
Tube well		56 (23.0)	
Well water		10 (4.1)	
River		2 (0.8)	
Socioeconomic status (income in Rs/month)		<5000	22 (9.0)
		5000-10,000	41 (16.8)
		10,000-20,000	60 (24.6)
	>20,000	48 (19.7)	
Do not wish to disclose	73 (29.9)		

12 (0–30) days and only 86/244 (35.2%) patients had a break in period following dialysis of 14 days as per ISPD guidelines.

Glucose based dialysis fluid was used in most of the cases (90.2%) as compared to non-glucose based dialysis fluid. Both were used in 22/244 (9.0%) patients. Although the number of PD exchanges ranged from 1 to 5 times daily, majority of the patients 189/244 (77.5%) had undergone 3 L × 2 L exchanges per day. A total of 185 patients, (75.8%) had 6 L of fluid exchanges per day which was performed by caretakers in 81.1% of the cases. A recent change in the caretaker was reported in 23/244 (11.6%) of which only 17/23 (73.9%) had a formal training in PD care.

Previous episodes, latency and seasonality of peritonitis

There were 159 (65.2%) patients who never had any episode of peritonitis in the past, while 53 (21.7%) recorded the second episode, 21 (8.6%) recorded the third episode, 7 (2.9%) patients recorded the fourth episode and 4 (1.6%) patients demonstrated the fifth episode. The median time (months) from first catheterisation to first episode of peritonitis was 8.9 (0.4–112.1), and corresponding time to their most recent episode of peritonitis was 12 (1–108) months. Table 2 compares

the time taken from catheterisation to the first episode of peritonitis, last episode of peritonitis and the time interval between last episode of peritonitis and the current episode. We have observed 110 (45.1%) patients develop peritonitis episodes in the monsoon season followed by 55 (22.5%) in post-monsoon period. A total of 44/244 (18.1%) episodes occurred during winter and 35/244 (14.3%) in summer. Only one patient reported exit site infection while none reported tunnel infection. Table 3 depicts the monthly distribution of peritonitis, microorganism-wise and their outcomes.

Sample transfer and techniques

A total of 164 samples (67.2%) were brought to the laboratory within 2 h of sample collection. Of the 85 culture positive samples, 62 (72.3%) reached the laboratory within 2 h of collection. However, 52 (21.3%) samples were stored at 4°C, of which only 18 (34.6%) were culture positive. Conventional method was used in 183 (75%) patients while automated method was used in 58 (23.8%) patients. Regarding the various techniques that were used in various centres, maximum culture positivity (72.7%, 8/11) was observed with an automated technique, where sediment after centrifugation at 3000 rpm (15 min) of 50 ml sample from whole bag was inoculated in an automated culture bottle and processed.

Peritoneal dialysis Effluent profile and microbiology

At baseline, only one patient had a visibly clear effluent PD bag, while remaining individuals had cloudy effluent. At presentation, there was increased white blood cell count in dialysate with a median (range) count of 1200 (45–31,600) cells/mm³. Data were unavailable for 13 (5.3%) samples. The data on differential leucocyte count showed a predominance of neutrophils (Median [range] [%] – 88 (0–100)). Culture and sensitivity were performed using conventional and automated methods in 183 (75.0%) and 58 (23.8%) patients, respectively. Culture was not sent in three cases (1.2%). Data on combined methods for culture (Conventional and automated culture) were not available from any centre in this study.

A total of 90 microorganisms were isolated from 85 (35%) samples in our study. The remaining 159 (65%) samples were culture negative. Within the culture positive samples, 80 (94.1%) samples demonstrated single micro-organism and 5 (5.9%) showed two micro-organisms. Automated culture technique was used in 44.8% culture positive cases as compared to 32.2%, using conventional method ($P = 0.08$). We found 43 (47.8%) Gram-negative and 33 (36.7%)

Gram-positive microorganism in our sample, respectively. However, remaining 12 (13.3%) episodes were caused by fungi and 2 (2.2%) were due to *M. tuberculosis*. The predominant microorganism that was grown included *Escherichia coli* (20%) followed by Coagulase negative *Staphylococcus* spp., (17.8%) and *Candida* species (13.3%).

Antibiotics for management of peritonitis

As a prophylactic care during catheter implantation, antibiotics were administered to 243 (99.6%) patients. The most commonly used antibiotic was vancomycin 1 g (35.4%). Cefazolin (30.9%) and tobramycin (16.5%) were the other most commonly used antibiotic.

Clinical outcome

Of the total 244 patients with peritonitis, 6 dropped out after first visit. A total of 179 participants completed the study. Figure 1 depicts the patient flow from the time of recruitment to the completion of the last study visit. During the last study visit, there were a total of 13 study participants with peritonitis. PD effluent cell count was analysed only for these study participants and was found to be elevated. Among 179 (73.4%) patients, 171 (95.5%) patients recovered from peritonitis while 8/179 (4.5%) did not recover. Overall, 14 (5.7%) patients died during the study, 51/244 (20.9%) patients dropped out from the study, 47/244 (19.3%) patients switched to another modality (HD or renal transplant), and 4/244 (1.6%) patients were lost to follow-up. The reasons for the loss to follow-up were the lower socioeconomic status, literacy, distance from centre, etc.

The clinical outcomes were similar in both culture positive and negative peritonitis patients. Recovery from peritonitis was seen in 68.2% of culture positive cases and 71.1% culture negative patients. In addition, 20% and 18.8% of patients were

Table 2: Time to appearance of peritonitis (months)

	First peritonitis time*	Last peritonitis time**	Last peritonitis time 2***
<i>n</i>	244	85	85
Mean	13.4	18.8	18.5
Median	8.9	12.0	11.9

*Duration from date of catheterisation to first episode of peritonitis.
 **Duration from date of catheterisation to last episode of peritonitis.
 ***Duration from last episode of peritonitis to current episode

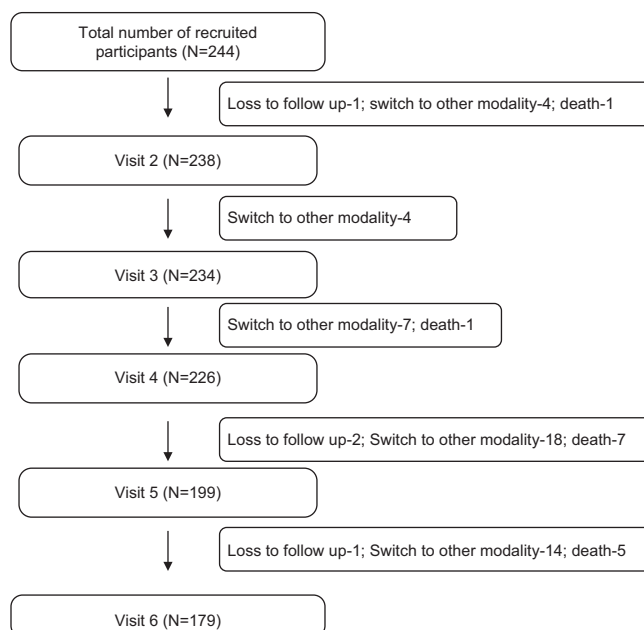


Figure 1: Flowchart of the study participants

Strain and microorganism isolated	Number of peritonitis episodes due to microorganism (1 and 2) due to seasonal variation											
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Gram positive	0	1	1	0	2	1	2	2	3	0	3	1
Coagulase negative <i>Staphylococcus</i> (16)	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	1	1	1
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> (10)	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
<i>Streptococcus pyogenes</i> (5)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
<i>Enterococcus</i> spp. (2)	3	1	1	2	3	3	3	2	6	2	5	2
Total episodes by gram positive species (33)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Gram negative	1	0	0	1	0	3	4	0	2	3	2	2
<i>Acinetobacter</i> spp. (4)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0
<i>Escherichia coli</i> (18)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0
<i>Enterobacter</i> spp. (4)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	2
<i>Klebsiella pneumoniae</i> (9)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Atcaligenes</i> (1)	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> (6)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<i>Oligellaureolytica</i> (1)	3	1	1	1	2	4	6	5	4	3	9	4
Total episodes by gram negative species (43)	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	2	2	3
Fungal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
<i>Candida albicans</i> (12)	7	2	2	4	5	7	10	7	14	7	16	9
<i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i> (2)	7	5	7	9	11	14	19	22	20	26	17	14
Episodes reported in each month	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	2	0	0
Outcomes	3	2	1	2	1	5	4	4	6	3	6	10
Recovery from peritonitis	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Infection on-going	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Switch to modality	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Lost to follow up	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Death	0	0	0	1	2	0	5	1	3	0	1	1

switched to either HD or renal transplantation, 9.4% and 3.8% died, 1.2% and 4.4% had on-going infections and 1.2% and 1.9% was lost to follow-up in culture positive and culture negative group.

Further we found that, out of 18 patients with *E. coli* infection, 12 (66.7%) recovered from peritonitis, 1 (5.6%) switched to HD and 5 (27.8%) died. Mortality was also recorded in 2/8 (20%) who grew *Staphylococcus aureus*, 1 each with *Acinetobacter* sp ($n = 3$), and *M. tuberculosis* ($n = 1$) died. The best outcomes were observed in patients with peritonitis caused by coagulase negative staphylococci ($n = 16$), in which 14 (87.5%) patients recovered from peritonitis, 2 (12.5%) switched to other modality, while none died as shown in Table 4. Most of the individuals infected with *Candida* spp., ($n = 12$) had switch to other modalities of renal replacement therapy following catheter removal (9, 75%) after a median duration of 14 days. *E. coli*, coagulase negative Staphylococci, *Candida* spp., *Klebsiella pneumonia* and *S. aureus* were the most frequent microorganisms responsible for hospitalisation of the patients. Statistical correlations were not made due to less number in each individual group.

DISCUSSION

The present study is the largest multi-centre nation-wide study from India reporting the pattern and outcomes of peritonitis from various geographical regions of the country. A proper understanding of the patterns of occurrence of peritonitis in patients on PD, their natural history in the course of therapy, and the various predisposing factors that identify patients at risk is crucial to therapeutic and prophylactic interventions.^[11]

The present study demonstrated a very high culture negativity rate (65.3%), value far greater than that suggested in ISPD guidelines (<20%). A culture negativity rate between 28% and 70% has been observed in several studies with conventional culture technique.^[10,12-14] Non-adherence to ISPD recommendations with regard to culture specimen collection and processing methods along with discordance in sampling technique might have resulted in high culture negativity rates. A study from South India had a culture negativity rate of 50% even with the use of automated system.^[7] Similar to this, we also found that when culture and sensitivity testing was done by automated technique, nearly 45% of the samples showed a growth of microorganisms as against 32% with the conventional techniques. Reason for culture negative peritonitis can be attributed to either use of conventional techniques versus automation, use of substandard media for culture, especially in the public sector hospitals and sub-optimal microbiological techniques. However, the number of samples was small to draw firm conclusions.

Increased incidence of Gram-negative organisms, unlike the western literature, has been encountered in other studies in India.^[10,14] Sharma *et al.* from North India had shown a predominance of Gram-negative organisms (60%–66%) with *E. coli* being most frequently isolated.^[12,13,15] Gupta *et al.* reported higher incidence of Gram-positive (55.5%) than Gram-negative organisms (45%) in South India.^[7] In this study, 47.8% Gram-negative and 36.7% Gram-positive microorganism were isolated, respectively. *E. coli* was the most common (20%) followed by Coagulase Negative Staphylococci (17.7%) of the total microorganism isolated. The incidence of fungal peritonitis in the present study (13.3%) was

Table 4: Microbiological profile of peritoneal dialysis fluid effluent and influence on patient outcome

Strain and microorganism isolated	Number of microorganism	Percentage ($n=90$)	Recovery from peritonitis ($n=171$) (%)	Infection on going ($n=8$)	Modality switch ($n=47$)	Lost follow-up ($n=4$)	Death ($n=14$)
Gram-positive							
Coagulase negative <i>Staphylococci</i>	16	17.77	14	0	2	0	0
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	10	11.11	8	0	1	0	2
<i>Streptococcus pyogenes</i>	5	5.55	4	0	0	1	0
<i>Enterococcus</i> spp.	2	2.22	1	0	1	0	0
Total Gram-positive cases (33) (%)			27 (81.8)	0	4 (12.1)	1 (3)	2 (6.1)
Gram-negative							
<i>Acinetobacter</i> spp.	4	4.44	3	0	0	0	1
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	18	20.00	12	0	1	0	5
<i>Enterobacter</i> spp.	4	4.44	4	0	0	0	0
<i>Klebsiella pneumonia</i>	9	10.00	6	0	2	0	0
<i>Alcaligenes</i>	1	1.11	1	0	0	0	0
<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>	6	6.66	5	1	0	0	
<i>Oligellaureolytica</i>	1	1.11	0	0	1	0	0
Total Gram-negative cases (43) (%)			31 (72.1)	1 (2.3)	4 (9.3)	0	6 (13.9)
Fungal							
<i>Candida</i> spp.	12	13.33	3	0	9	0	0
<i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i>	2	2.22	1	0	0	0	1
Total	90	100					

found to be similar to previous studies from India.^[7,13,16] A study by Lo *et al.* found that use of antifungal prophylaxis during any antibiotic therapy resulted in decreased risk of *Candida* peritonitis.^[17] Hospitalisation was necessary in about 71% of total peritonitis episodes in this study, which is consistent with the literature. The data are similar to that of a study by Ghali *et al.* wherein hospitalisation occurred for 70% of total episodes.^[18]

Proper treatment is crucial for favourable outcome of PD-related peritonitis. Inadequate culture facilities in many hospitals are contributing to the need for broad spectrum empirical antibiotics, which are expensive and drives the emergence of antimicrobial resistance.^[19] Though initial empirical antibiotic prescription is recommended, it is generally expected that local epidemiology and sensitivity pattern should guide the appropriate antibiotic selection. According to ISPD guidelines also, the initial treatment of peritonitis (prior to the results of microbiological tests) should be based on a combination of drugs for coverage of Gram-positive cocci and Gram-negative organisms.^[6] In the present study, vancomycin (54.9%), cefazolin (43.4%) and ceftazidime (42.2%) were the most frequently prescribed antimicrobials. Gram-positive organisms may respond to vancomycin or a cephalosporin, and Gram-negative organisms to a third generation cephalosporin or aminoglycoside.

Although ISPD guidelines recommend a beta-lactam and use of vancomycin to be restricted to patients with methicillin-resistant *S. aureus*, we found vancomycin being the preferred empirical antimicrobial in our study.^[6] The choice of empiric outpatient treatment is dictated by convenience of self-administration by the patient and by the drug's pharmacokinetics, its cost, and its effectiveness. The pharmacokinetics of vancomycin allows IP dosing at weekly intervals.^[20] In addition, Santoianni *et al.* 2008 recommended vancomycin plus ceftazidime or imipenem as the empirical antibiotics in the long term study.^[21] A study which compared the efficacy of vancomycin versus cefazolin in PD peritonitis patients found that patient compliance and satisfaction was better with vancomycin than cefazolin when used as empirical antimicrobial.^[22]

In our study, 171 (95.5%) patients recovered from peritonitis at the end of trial. The clinical recovery was similar in both culture positive (68.2%) and negative (71.1%) peritonitis. Recovery from peritonitis was higher in Gram-positive than Gram-negative peritonitis and the mortality rate was higher for Gram-negative than for Gram-positive infections, which is similar to other reports including from India.^[14,23-25] High recovery rate may point towards the proper and timely use of empirical antibiotics and later supported by culture and antibiotic susceptibility results. Furthermore, continuous review of every episode of infection and timely change of interventions may have helped to improve outcomes.

However, this being an observational study has its own limitations. Observational studies are not scientifically capable

of proving or disproving hypothesis. The same also applies to this epidemiological study due to the heterogeneity of real-life patient populations, the lack of standardised culture methods, treatment regimens and standardised indications for change of treatment. Furthermore, the total sample could not be recruited despite extending the enrolment period.

CONCLUSION

This first report from a large database offers insight into the aetiology and outcomes of PD related peritonitis in India, which are germane to clinical decision-making. The study has described the demography, microbiology, treatment and outcomes of peritonitis in Indian PD patients. Information regarding the seasonal trend and outcomes of peritonitis based on causative organism may help to identify patients with poor prognosis and take preventive and proper therapeutic measures. Much remains to be learned, and several areas require further research. A more detailed knowledge of the reasons for high culture negativity and resistance profiles of the causative organisms is needed to guide appropriate antibiotic therapy and improve peritonitis outcome.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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