

Measles outbreak among children at a South African Academic Hospital: A descriptive study

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Measles was virtually eliminated in South Africa in 1997. However, from January 2009 to September 2010, there were 17826 serology-confirmed measles cases. A study was thus conducted to determine the clinical features and complications of measles infection during the outbreak had their hospital files scrutinized. The following data were obtained from their files; age, weight, history of measles contact, immunization and HIV status, clinical features, measles complications, mortality and measles IgM results. In all, 128 children were enrolled and measles IgM results were positive in 105 of them. Further analysis was conducted on these 105 children. Commonest clinical features included cough (observed in 97 children) (92%) followed by fever, seen in 93 children (89%) and conjunctivitis, affecting 82 children (78%). Six children were HIV-infected; four of them were on antiretroviral therapy. The commonest complications were pneumonia and diarrhea affecting 51 and 49 children respectively. Low weight-for age, incomplete immunization and HIV infection were not shown to be risk factors for acquiring measles infection. However, age younger than 6 months, incomplete immunization and malnutrition were significantly associated with having severe disease (requiring high care or intensive care). A total of 104 children were discharged and one child died. Malnutrition, incomplete immunization and age younger than six months seem to affect the severity of the disease. Pneumonia and diarrhea appear to be the commonest complications in children requiring hospitalization.

Biography

Siyazi Mda obtained his medical degree from the University of Natal, South Africa and subsequently qualified as a South African board certified pediatrician. He has a Ph.D. from Wageningen University in The Netherlands. He is currently working as principal paediatrician and adjunct Professor in the School of Medicine at the Medunsa Campus of the University of Limpopo.

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