CUTANEOUS SPOROTRICHOSIS: A GROWING EPIDEMIC OF ZOONOTIC TRANSMISSION IN JOHOR, MALAYSIA

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Background: Sporotrichosis is a subacute to chronic infection caused by the dimorphic fungus Sporothrix schenckii, classically transmitted via traumatic inoculation through decaying wood, plants and soil. In the recent years, zoonotic transmission is increasingly reported, mostly associated with cats.

Objective: We aim to study the clinical characteristics of cutaneous sporotrichosis and the significance of zoonotic transmission of sporotrichosis from cats to humans.

Methodology: This is a retrospective study of all cases of cutaneous sporotrichosis diagnosed in 2 district hospitals in Johor from July 2016 to June 2018.

Results: Thirty-three cases of cutaneous sporotrichosis were identified. Eleven cases were diagnosed from July 2016-June 2017, whereas 22 cases in July 2017-June 2018. In 29 cases (87.9%), patients recalled a history of cat exposure/scratch/bite. Of this number, fourteen patients (51.9%) reported that the cats whom they had contact with were sick. Lymphocutaneous sporotrichosis was observed in 27 cases (81.8%), followed by 6 cases of fixed cutaneous sporotrichosis (18.2%). All patients tolerated oral itraconazole and were successfully treated after a mean duration of 93.5 (IQR: 40.0) days.

Conclusion: Cat contact was the commonest causal factors for cutaneous sporotrichosis. Animal and human health policies need to be engaged to reduce zoonotic transmission of sporotrichosis.