FIRST CASE OF EXTENSIVELY DRUG-RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS IN GREECE

Z. Gitti¹, I. K. Neonakis¹, M. Baritaki¹, I. S. Kourbeti², E. Petinaki³, F. Kontos³, A. Georgiladakis¹, G. Sevastaki¹, G. Metaxaris¹, S. Bazigos¹, E. Krambovitis⁴, D. A. Spandidos¹

1. Mycobacteriology Laboratory, Department of Clinical Bacteriology, Parasitology, Zoonoses and Geographical Medicine, University Hospital of Heraklion, 71201 Heraklion, Greece
2. Department of Internal Medicine, University Hospital of Heraklion, 71201 Heraklion, Greece
3. Department of Microbiology, School of Medicine, University of Thessaly, 41222 Larissa, Greece.
4. Microbiology and Parasitology Laboratory, Department of Veterinary Medicine, School of Health Sciences, University of Thessaly, 43100 Karditsa, Greece

Purpose: To describe the first extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) case in Greece. According to the World Health Organization, XDR-TB is TB showing resistance to at least isoniazid (INH) and rifampicin (RMP), in addition to any fluoroquinolone, and to at least one of the three following injectable drugs used in anti-TB treatment: capreomycin, kanamycin and amikacin

Case Presentation: Mycobacterium tuberculosis was isolated on 9-6-2004 from the sputum of a Hepatitis-B Virus-positive 44-year-old Romanian illegal male immigrant with multiple submissions to Romanian and Greek hospitals due to active tuberculosis, among others. Drug susceptibilities of the isolate were determined with Lowenstein-Jensen slants incorporating the relevant antibiotics (bioMerieux, France) using the conventional proportions method. The strain was resistant to isoniazid (1 µg/ml), rifampicin (40 µg/ml), streptomycin (10 µg/ml) and pyrazinamide (200 µg/ml), and it was susceptible to ethambutol (3µg/ml), and para-aminosalicyclic acid (1 µg/ml). The strain was further tested with an extended panel of anti-tuberculosis drugs (Liofilchem, Italy) exhibiting susceptibility to rifabutine (10 µg/ml), ofloxacin (5 µg/ml), cycloserine (30 µg/ml), kanamycin (10 µg/ml) and amikacin (5 µg/ml), and resistance to ethionamide (10 µg/ml), nicotinamide (10 µg/ml), capreomycin (10 µg/ml), pyruvate 0.2%, pefloxacin (2 µg/ml) and rifapentin (9 µg/ml). Although it is generally accepted that there is cross-resistance/susceptibility amongst fluoroquinolones, it has been shown in the past that ofloxacin is a more active molecule than pefloxacin against M. tuberculosis. Based on the above resistance profile, the strain was considered as an XDR-TB strain.

Conclusion/Discussion: XDR-TB is a major threat to public health and TB control worldwide. The patient consistently refused to fully cooperate with the medical and other public authorities and he has become a “moving threat” for the community. Such incidents should be taken into serious consideration by the authorities, and appropriate regulations, even at the level of legislation, should be devised.