



Human Leishmaniasis / a review

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Abstract

Leishmania is a flagellate protozoan that causes a chronic illness called leishmaniasis. Most cases of this worldwide illness are found in the Mediterranean region, South America, and some parts of Africa and Asia; There are three primary forms of leishmaniasis: cutaneous, mucocutaneous, and visceral. *Leishmania* diagnosis is made by determining the amastigote stage in clinical specimens by direct microscopic inspection. There are several therapies for cutaneous infections. The use of immune factors of leishmaniasis has helped in how the disease is has been treated in recent years.

Keywords: leishmaniasis, Flagellate protozoa.

Introduction

More than 20 species of *Leishmania* flagellate cause leishmaniasis, zoonotic chronic illness caused by obligate intracellular parasites that spread due to female sandfly bites from the genera *Lutzomyia* and *Phlebotomus*, carrying the infections in humans. *Leishmania donovani* and *Leishmania tropica* are two examples in which humans are the primary reservoirs; the predominant reservoirs are dogs and rodents [1].

The World Health Organization evaluated that there are (700,000 to 1 million) cases of leishmaniasis every year, of which (50,000 to 90,000) are thought to be visceral leishmaniasis [2].

Ninety-five percent of cases of cutaneous leishmaniasis are found in the Middle East, South America, and in the Central Asia or Mediterranean Basin.

In contrast, Visceral leishmaniasis is more common in Brazil, India, and eastern Africa. Over 95% of new Visceral leishmaniasis cases were from China, Brazil, India, Iraq, Kenya, Somalia Sudan, and Nepal in 2018, more than 85% of new cutaneous leishmaniasis cases were from Bolivia, Afghanistan, Brazil, Syria, Colombia, Algeria, Iran, Tunisia, Iraq, Pakistan, and Ethiopia [2].

Ultimately, reports of new cases of mucocutaneous leishmaniasis came from four countries: Ethiopia, Peru, Bolivia, and

Brazil, accounting for approximately 90% of occurrences [2].

Historically, based on its geographical location, leishmaniasis has been considered as either Old World or New World. *Leishmania infantum*, *aethiopica*, *major*, and *tropica* are the main causes of Old World leishmaniasis, which is found in Asia, Africa, and Europe[3].

“*Leishmania amazonensis*, *Leishmania panamensis*, *Leishmania Mexicana*, *Leishmania infantum chagasi* or *Leishmania braziliensis*” are subspecies of *L. infantum* in the New World that were originally known as *Leishmania chagasi* are the core causes of New World leishmaniasis, which in turn ensues throughout America [4].

L. infantum is the primary pathogenic species in cutaneous leishmaniasis and visceral leishmaniasis, and it is spread by *Phlebotomus arias* and *Phlebotomus perniciosus*. Although, additional reservoirs including hares and rats have been reported, dogs are the primary carrier of *L. infantum* [5].

In addition to its endemic form, leishmaniasis can also affect individuals with weakened immune systems, such as those receiving treatment for tumor necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitors or HIV infection [6].

Additionally, have occurred, including the Madrid pandemic that occurred between 2009 and 2013. Finally, leishmaniasis is becoming more common in wealthy nations because of factors such as globalization, migration, and international travel [3].

Pathogenesis

Infected female sandflies inject *leishmania* promastigotes into human skin; they become amastigotes by the phagocytosis of macrophages, proliferating within the cells and spreading the infection to more mononuclear phagocytized cells [1]. Sandflies pick up the infection by consuming

contaminated cells when they are feeding on the blood of their hosts; After entering the sandfly's digestive tract, the amastigotes change into promastigotes [7].

Leishmaniasis has a different incubation periods depending on the clinical manifestation of the illness; however, in general, mucocutaneous leishmaniasis takes longer than two years, Visceral leishmaniasis takes three to nine months, and cutaneous leishmaniasis takes two weeks or less[8].

The host's immunological response and the species involved determine the clinical symptoms of leishmaniasis[1].

The immune response spectrum varies from a robust “T-cell” response that generates humoral response such as interferon (IFN, which raises the levels of antibodies. IFN-activated macrophages eradicate *Leishmania* species, but antibodies are unable to neutralize them. For this reason, humoral responses are incapable of managing impurity, whereas those with a robust immunity require lesions with few parasites. It is an uncontrolled infection that leads to diffuse CL. It should be mentioned that more severe types of illness, including MCL, are linked to an amplified “T helper type1 “response and higher expression of “CD8+ T cells” [1].

Leishmaniasis and body interactions

The bitten body site, which is usually found uncovered, like the face or extremities, cutaneous leishmaniasis begins with the creation of a papule. Usually, a papule grows into a nodule with an ulcerative propensity, For example, after contracting *L. Mexicana*, gum collectors in Central America and Mexico get the typical ulcerated lesion on their ear [9].

Sporotrichosis lesions, lymph node enlargement, and other conditions can result from an infection that spreads via the lymphatic system and causes single or many cutaneous leishmaniasis lesions [10].

In the New World, typical types such as verrucous, lupoid, annular, and eczematous scratches are more prevalent [11]. Within a few months, cutaneous leishmaniasis lesions can heal on their own, leaving a scar [11]. On the other hand, some instances worsen or spread [12].

The growth of papules along the edges of previously healed ulcers is a characteristic of the chronic, recurring types of *L. tropica* infections [13].

Numerous variables, including elevated arginase activity in polymorphonuclear leukocytes, have been associated with chronicity[14].Caused by *L.amazonensis*, *L.aethiopica*, or *L.Mexicana*, , diffuse cutaneous leishmaniasis manifests as many nodules or nonulcerated papules over the majority of the cutaneous infections; The lesions can cause major alterations to the face, giving the appearance of a leonine, similar to that of lepromatous leprosy, They also occur with parasites mucosal lesions[15].Mucosal involvement may develop concurrently with cutaneous contribution a year after cutaneous lesions have been vacant. The lymphatic or circulatory systems may both be used by the illness to spread.

More than 20% of patients may have mucosal involvement in endemic areas; although *L.braziliensis* is the primary cause of mucocutaneous leishmaniasis instances *L. guyanensis* ,*L. amazonensis* , ,and *L. panamensis* are also implicated [16].

The most often impacted sites are the oral and nasal mucosa [17]. Oral cavity lesions have the potential to extend to the larynx and oropharynx, impacting the cartilage and voice cords. The ulcerated cutaneous leishmaniasis lesions might result in deformity. Since the illness might be deadly, treatment is necessary to manage infection [18].

In Visceral Leishmaniasis, macrophages invade the spleen, liver, and bone marrow via

the reticuloendothelial system. Weight loss, enlargement of the lymph nodes, hepatosplenomegaly, and fever are among the clinical symptoms [19].

Mostly, Visceral leishmaniasis is caused in immunocompromised people and children by *L. infantum*, and in adults by *L. donovani* and *L. chagasi* [20].

Additionally, skin symptoms may appear in patients. These may be general or specific, such as purpura and hyperpigmentation, nodules, ulcers, and papules. In the Hindu word, kala-azar means Hyperpigmentation, which translates to "black fever", Which is the darkening of the skin that could be seen in 9.88% of Visceral leishmaniasis patients 24, and it has recently been connected to elevated cortisol production [21].

Hyperpigmented regions may be a particular symptom of leishmaniasis because histology reveals amastigotes [5]. Developing post-kala-azar can manifest up to 20 years after therapy and is more prevalent in immunosuppressed patients[22].

However, in HIV-positive individuals, PKDL may occur along with visceral leishmaniasis or occasionally before it[23]. It is typified by,verrucous papules or flesh-coloured nodules that mostly affect the face but can also migrate to other parts of the body, It Occurs primarily in India and East Africa, with few occurrences reported in Spain[24].

Geographical location and host immunological response influence the clinical appearance of 90% cases in Asia, which manifest as macules, but the majority of cases in Africa are papules.

Immunosuppressed individuals may have unusual forms of infection, such as nodules that do not always include the face and a larger quantity of parasites in lesions [24].

Diagnosis

Finding the amastigotes stage of

Leishmania in patient samples by simple microscopic examination or molecular investigation based on kinetoplast or amplification of nuclear DNA, is the best way by which leishmaniasis is diagnosed. Rounded amastigotes range in diameter from 1-4 μ m and feature a distinctive kinetoplast, a rod-shaped structure [25].

Due to the low sensitivity of some diagnostic methods, diagnosis requires a mix of procedures. For instance, biopsy specimens may be divided into sections for use in touch imprint cytology, histopathology, and culture [26].

The level of diagnostic sensitivity in vitro for Visceral leishmaniasis varies depending on the kind of tissue infected; for example, spleen tissue can reach up to 90%. It could be diagnosed by aspiration, yet there is a significant risk of intra-abdominal hemorrhage [27].

Bone marrow infections have been reported to range between 50% and 85%; even lower rates have been observed for peripheral blood and lymph nodes [28].

The kind of lesion studied determines the diagnostic sensitivity in infection; rates of up to 100% for nodular lesions contrast with relatively low rates for macular lesions, where more sensitive molecular approaches are required [29].

Histology can reveal particular abnormalities, including the presence of amastigotes stage in the macrophages of the skin, seen in 50-70% of cases, as well as nonspecific signs, like, pseudoepitheliomatous hyperplasia, ulceration, and a mixed inflammatory infiltrate [28].

Giant cells proliferate and the number of parasites decreases with the development of lesions; additional observations also have suggested tuberculoid granulomas, dermal fibrosis, and a high concentration of plasma cells in advanced stages [30].

Histologic patterns have been identified during leishmaniasis infection, usually including the occurrence of a large number of amastigote stages, a mixture of neutrophils, macrophages, and plasma cells together with necrosis; 3- early granulomas containing lymphocytes, epithelioid cells, and plasma cells; and 4- fully developed granulomas containing Langhans-type giant cells, also diffuse cutaneous leishmaniasis is characterized by a diffuse macrophage infiltration that contains a high number of amastigotes [30].

Another helpful diagnostic tool is dermoscopy [31]. Vascular structures Erythema, hairpin, comprising polymorphous, and arborizing vessels; crusts and erosion/ulceration are the most often reported dermoscopic features. Furthermore, teardrop shapes with white-yellow coloured and the pattern with white starburst were less prevalent but more distinctive features [32].

Other tests, such as serological and Montenegro skin test, are less helpful in cutaneous leishmaniasis diagnosis, in which Leishmanin is injected intradermally in the former, and the findings are evaluated and read similarly to the tuberculin test. It cannot be distinguished between an ongoing or former infection and is negative in diffuse cutaneous leishmaniasis, active Visceral leishmaniasis [33]. The Western blot analysis, enzyme-linked immunoassay (ELISA), Immunofluorescence, and direct agglutination test are examples of effective serological assays used for Visceral leishmaniasis [34].

Antibody titers, however, do not distinguish between ongoing and prior infections and these titers decrease very slowly following treatment. Also, cross-reactivity with other antibodies (such as those that cause Chagas disease) can potentially impact on results [33].

Moreover, antibodies are frequently present in asymptomatic people in endemic

locations; therefore data must be carefully interpreted in light of the clinical setting.

ELISA has shown that cutaneous leishmaniasis brought on by *L. major* and *L. tropica* is associated with anti-galactosyl antibodies with high levels. These have the same restrictions as conventional serological tests, but they have a high sensitivity for visceral leishmaniasis (Boelaert et al., 2014) [35].

ELISA and the latex agglutination test using samples of urine in visceral leishmaniasis and an immunochromatographic strip that detects for peroxidoxin antigen in cutaneous leishmaniasis are examples of more modern antigen detection assays [36].

Treatment

Many leishmaniasis cases resolve on their own in less than two years; the species involved has a major influence on the variations in resolution times, with infections produced by *L. braziliensis* and *L. panamensis* having the highest propensity to persist. [37].

Cutaneous leishmaniasis can be categorized as simple or complicated based on this and other variables such as anatomic location, infection intensity, and the host's immunological response. While complicated infections need systemic medications, simple infections can be treated conservatively or with local remedies [38].

Summarizes the characteristics of both basic and complicated cutaneous leishmaniasis has several therapies available, yet there is little evidence to support the alternatives for cutaneous leishmaniasis [39].

For patients who satisfy the requirements for uncomplicated cutaneous leishmaniasis, a watch-and-wait strategy can be used after balancing the risks and benefits. Lesions that do not heal on their own, when a quicker recovery is desired, or when there is a desire to minimize scarring, local therapy may be

employed. Cryotherapy and intralesional pentavalent antimonial are the most often used local therapies [38]. When both are used together, better results are obtained [39]. Additionally, topical paromomycin is utilized to treat cutaneous leishmaniasis, especially in the New World.

There has been information of positive outcomes from several local therapies, including imiquimod; photodynamic therapy; and carbon dioxide laser therapy [40], which has demonstrated success rates of 93% and relatively minor side effects (hyperpigmentation, prolonged erythema, and hypertrophic scarring).

Patients who satisfy any of the requirements for cutaneous leishmaniasis are advised to get systemic treatments. Although liposomal amphotericin B is very effective, nephrotoxicity is a possibility [41].

Systemic pentavalent antibiotics have been used for treating complicated cutaneous leishmaniasis and mucocutaneous leishmaniasis for a long time, yet this use has limited the development of resistance in some locations [42]. Azole compounds, miltefosine and pentamidine are more choices [43].

A three-month clinical investigation comparing once-daily doxycycline 200 mg with twice-daily chloroquine 250 mg has been shown effectiveness [44].

For individuals with cutaneous leishmaniasis caused by *L. braziliensis*, yearly examinations are advised in order to facilitate the early identification of mucocutaneous leishmaniasis progression [39]. However, amphotericin B or miltefosine systemic therapy is typically required in India [2].

Prevention and Control

There are currently no human leishmaniasis preventive vaccinations available. The majority of leishmaniasis patients who recover do not re-infect

themselves, which makes vaccine research easier. Aside from vector control, early diagnosis and treatment are important control measures for cutaneous leishmaniasis and visceral leishmaniasis because infected humans serve as reservoirs [45].

Conclusions

The prevalence of cutaneous leishmaniasis has increased as a result of migration and foreign travel.

However, low indices of distrust between physicians, low sensitivity of some diagnostic tests, restricted access to molecular testing; Unfavourable treatment outcomes, and limited therapy alternatives might make care challenging. Atypical manifestations and the necessity for systemic therapy are linked to HIV coinfection and TNF inhibitor usage.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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داء الليشمانيات البشري

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الخلاصة:

الليشمانيا من الاوالي المسببة مرضًا مزمنًا يسمى داء الليشمانيات. توجد معظم حالات هذا المرض العالمي في منطقة البحر الأبيض المتوسط، أمريكا الجنوبية، بعض أجزاء أفريقيا وآسيا؛ هناك ثلاثة أشكال من داء الليشمانيات: الجلدي، المخاطي، والحشوي. تشخيص الليشمانيا يتم عن طريق تمييز طور المشيقة في العينات السريرية عن طريق الفحص المجهرى المباشر. هناك العديد من العلاجات للاصابات الجلدية. استخدام العوامل المناعية اسهم في علاج المرض في السنوات الأخيرة.