
Letters to the Editor

Primary Lung Abscess—A Not so Rare Cause of Clubbing

Digital clubbing is an important physical sign of respiratory disease. In children the common causes are bronchiolitis, empyema and cystic fibrosis. Uncommon causes include bronchiolitis obliterans, chronic asthma and pulmonary arteriovenous malformations. Though lung abscess is an accepted common cause of clubbing in adults, it has been found to be only rarely associated with clubbing in children.

We report here (*Table*) five cases of lung abscess in children admitted in our hospital in the last two years—two of whom had clubbing.

To our knowledge there have been no reports of clubbing associated with lung abscess in recent literature. Standard text books state that clubbing of digits in lung abscess in children is rare, only one case being reported in the last three decades(1).

If clubbing takes only 10-14 days to develop in suppurative lung disease(2), it is

TABLE—Summary of Cases

Age*/Sex ⁺	Duration of symptoms ⁺⁺	Clubbing
5/M	15	NIL
3/M	15	NIL
3/M	20	Grade II
9/M	15	NIL
9/M	15	Grade III

* Age in years; + M - Male, F - Female;
++ Duration in days.

surprising that it does not occur more often in children with lung abscess. It appears that clubbing in lung abscess in children may not be as rare as is reported.

REFERENCES

1. Asher MI, Beaudry PH. Lung abscess. *In: Disorders of the Respiratory Tract in Children*, 5th edn. Eds Kendig EL, Chernick V. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders Co, 1990, pp 429-436.
2. Crompton GK, McHardy GJR. Suppurative pneumonia. *In: Davidson's Principles and Practice of Medicine*, 16th edn. Eds Edwards CRW, Bouchier IAD. Edinburgh, Churchill Livingstone, 1991, pp 362-364.

N.A. D'Souza,
B.B. Lakhkar,
N. Bhaskaranand,
*Department of Pediatrics,
Kasturba Medical College Hospital,
Manipal 576 119,
Karnataka.*