

## Is Febrile Thrombocytopenia Synonymous with Dengue Fever?

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Dear Sir,

The area recently witnessed epidemic of dengue fever with its hemorrhagic manifestations and shock resulting in some young deaths. Hence it became dictum to investigate every case of fever with thrombocytopenia for dengue.

Purpura was recognized as a manifestation of pestilential fever 2000 years ago.<sup>1</sup> Several factors are now known to cause bleeding in association with infection, of which thrombocytopenia is the most common. Thrombocytopenia is defined as a subnormal number of platelets in the circulatory blood. The commonest infective cause of thrombocytopenia is malaria. Thrombocytopenia occurs in over 80 % of patients with malaria.<sup>2</sup>

We examined 50 HRP-2 positive blood samples for platelet counts by coulter counter. The platelet count was found to be ranging from 11,000 to 1,18,000/ $\mu$ l. The range of platelet count for Plasmodium vivax malaria cases was found to be 24,000 to 1,18,000/ $\mu$ l. In Plasmodium falciparum malaria cases platelet count ranged from 11,000 to 86,000/ $\mu$ l.

Several viruses including dengue viruses produce thrombocytopenia by different mechanisms. The administration of live measles vaccine produced significant yet subclinical thrombocytopenia in most normal children.<sup>3</sup>

Thrombocytopenia is commonly associated with septicemia resulting from both gram negative and gram positive bacteria. Theoretically any bacterial or protozoal infection can be associated with thrombocytopenia.<sup>4</sup>

The most important therapy for infection-related thrombocytopenia is that directed at the underlying infection. Platelet transfusion, even when they do not result in an increased platelet

count, can be used to control bleeding until the antimicrobial therapy takes effect.

Hence, febrile thrombocytopenia case should be investigated for other infections besides dengue.

### References:

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