

Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Surveillance

Abstract:

Sir,

Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia (CDH) is a rare congenital disorder as a result of deficient development of the diaphragm with resultant herniation of abdominal viscera into the thoracic cavity, mal-development of the alveoli and pulmonary vessels^{1,2}. The incidence of CDH ranges from 1 in 2,000 to 1 in 15,000 births³. Due to the legislation in Ireland against termination of pregnancy it was suggested that there may be an increased incidence of CDH. There is no mandatory reporting of CDH cases in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and Northern Ireland (NI). Voluntary case reporting to the Irish Paediatric Surveillance Unit (IPSU) started in January 2010.

Data on the CDH cases reported to the IPSU between January 2010 and December 2011 were collated and analyzed by the authors in order to determine the true incidence of CDH in the ROI and NI. This is hoped to enable the health service to plan services that would benefit children with this condition more effectively. Medical professionals reported new CDH cases to the IPSU using a pro-forma. The IPSU in turn notified the authors of the new case reports and passed on the health professionals' contact information. The health professionals were sent a CDH questionnaire developed by the authors using a self-addressed envelope. These questionnaires were completed and returned. Information collected was entered into Microsoft Access database and were analyzed using the SPSS version 20 (IBM). The questionnaire was completed in half of the cases. Twenty three (23) cases were reported to the IPSU within the two year period 2010 and 2011. This comprised of 10 cases in 2010 and 13 in 2011. Eight of the 23 cases were from NI while 15 cases from the ROI. The incidence rate in the 2 years using the IPSU figures was 12 per 100,000 live births or 0.12 per 1000 live births per annum. However Hospital in Patient Enquiry (HIPE) record in one of the three surgical centres indicated that only 6/15 (40%) cases managed in that centre in the 2-year period were reported to the IPSU.

In conclusion it was difficult to determine the true incidence of CDH using the IPSU data due under-reporting. Increased reporting maybe enhanced by increasing the awareness of the IPSU to all health professionals caring for children.

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Comments: