ring loss in patients with sickle cell anaemia in Kenya

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Abstract:

The auditory function of sixty two Kenyan sickle cell anaemia patients aged seven to thirty years was compared to age-matched fifty five healthy controls with haemoglobin AA. Sensorineural hearing loss of 30 db and above was demonstrated in 25 (40%) of sickle cell anaemia patients and in three (5.5%) control subjects. Both sexes were equally affected. Bilateral lesion registered in 16%. Hearing threshold level was normal in 97% of the sickle cell group. High frequencies were commonly affected with hearing loss of 30-40 db. Two cases with severe unilateral deafness at all frequencies had severe recruitment suggestive of cochlea lesion. There were no cases of acoustic reflex decay in all study patients. The hearing loss was of slow onset. The high risk of deafness in Kenyan sickle cell anaemia patients may be a reflection of the severe course of the disease due to specific Kenyan haematological profile (haplotype 20 with low Hb F level), the level of medical care available and the geographical distribution in the tropics together with other factors.