Abstract:

{BACKGROUND/AIMS} Ventriculoperitoneal shunt complications have scarcely been reported in sub-Saharan Africa. This study aimed at determining the frequency of these complications and their associated risk factors in a Kenyan National Teaching and Referral Hospital. {METHODS} This cross-sectional study retrospectively covered 117 patients admitted to the Kenyatta National Hospital neurosurgical ward between January 2005 and December 2007 with ventriculoperitoneal shunt complications. The data obtained were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. {RESULTS} The most common complication was obstruction in 63 patients (53.8%), followed by migration in 25 (21.4%) and infection in 23 (19.7%) of the patients. Up to 49.6% of the complications occurred in patients younger than 6 months. Multiple complications were seen in 23.9% of the cases. The mean shunt duration was 18.05 months. Positive correlations existed between the presence of a shunt complication and patient age, shunt duration and the number of complications developed. These correlations were, however, neither strong nor statistically significant. {CONCLUSION} This study reports the highest frequencies of shunt obstruction and migration ever recorded in the literature. The high rate of development of multiple shunt failures coupled with a short shunt duration calls for a closer monitoring of patients with ventriculoperitoneal shunts.