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Letters to the Editor

Susceptibilities to Co-Trimoxazole of Pathogens Isolated from Blood and Stool Specimens in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, 1994 to 1996

Prophylaxis of opportunistic infections with co-trimoxazole (CMX) is now being discussed in various African settings where human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is highly prevalent (4). Bacterial septicemia and diarrhea are frequently diagnosed in African HIV-infected patients (2, 5). We reviewed the susceptibilities to CMX of bacteria isolated from blood and stool specimens in a reference hospital in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, from 1994 to 1996.

The Centre Hospitalier de Treichville (CHT) is one of the three university hospitals of Abidjan. In 1995, more than 70% of inpatients from the Infectious Disease department of the CHT were HIV infected (3). Using records of the microbiology laboratory, we identified all bacterial isolates obtained from adult inpatients at the CHT from January 1994 to December 1996. Pathogens were cultured and then identified biochemically according to standard reference methods. Antimicrobial susceptibility of pathogens was determined by disk diffusion (1).

During this period, 478 strains were isolated from blood and 101 strains were isolated from stool specimens, of 3,964 and 2,024 specimens processed, respectively. A total of 78% of positive blood specimens and 86% of positive stool specimens originated from the Infectious Disease department of the CHT. Non-*Salmonella typhi* *Salmonella* strains accounted for 52% of the isolated pathogens. As shown in Table 1, almost

two-thirds of the total number of strains tested were sensitive to CMX. Most of the *Salmonella* strains, but only 23% of *Shigella* strains, were CMX sensitive.

When used in prevention of protozoal infections, CMX could also prevent some bacterial diseases in African HIV-infected patients. Non-*S. typhi* *Salmonella* is known to be the most frequent cause of bacterial septicemia and diarrhea in such patients (2, 5). In Abidjan, unlike in other African settings, non-*S. typhi* *Salmonella* strains remain largely sensitive to CMX. The prophylactic use of CMX among HIV-infected patients is currently being evaluated in The Ivory Coast (ANRS 059 trial), while drug resistance is being closely monitored.

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TABLE 1. Pathogens isolated from blood and stool cultures for adult inpatients from CHT, Abidjan, from 1994 to 1996

Culture type and pathogen	No. of strains isolated	% Strains susceptible to CMX
Blood		
Non- <i>S. typhi</i> <i>Salmonella</i>	252	86
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	68	25
<i>Salmonella typhi</i>	31	100
<i>Klebsiella pneumoniae</i>	32	53
<i>Enterobacter cloacae</i>	18	83
<i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i>	11	27
Other	66	38
Total	478	68
Stool		
Non- <i>S. typhi</i> <i>Salmonella</i>	47	78
<i>Shigella</i> sp.	35	23
Other	19	47
Total	101	51
Grand total	579	65