

The haematological manifestations of visceral leishmaniasis in infancy and childhood.

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The haematological manifestations were reviewed in 94 patients (55 males and 39 females) with visceral leishmaniasis. Their ages ranged from 4 months to 12 years (mean per cent 1.8 years). All patients had splenomegaly and were anaemic, while (73 per cent) were neutropenic and (56 per cent) thrombocytopenic. Coagulation abnormalities were encountered in 10 (11 per cent) patients; in four patients this was associated with disseminated intravascular coagulopathy. Bone marrow was hypercellular in (90 per cent), normocellular in (5 per cent), and hypocellular in (4 per cent). Also variable degrees of erythrophagocytosis and leukophagocytosis were noted with preponderance of histiocytes (46 per cent) and granulomatous formation (25 per cent). Low haemosiderin content in the bone marrow was noted, which together with the finding of high serum ferritin is consistent with anaemia of chronic inflammation. Hypersplenism, haemophagocytosis and granulomatous lesions of the bone marrow, chronic inflammation, and dietary factors appear to be the most important factors in the causation of the haematological changes in visceral leishmaniasis.

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