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Brucella endocarditis. A late onset complication of acute Brucellosis?

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Background & Aim: *Brucella endocarditis* (BE) is a life threatening complication of Brucellosis. Even though there are many reports in the literature on BE it is not clear whether endocarditis occurs early in the course of the illness or as a late onset complication.

Method: A systematic review on MEDLINE and Google Scholar retrieved 135 articles, case reports and cases series of patients with *Brucella endocarditis*. of them only 45 contained information on the history of the disease and its course over time, accounting for 125 patients in total.

Results: 125 patients were included. 89 were male (71.2%), mean age was 44.6 years (12.6 sd). Aortic valve was affected in 61% of patients, mitral valve 8% and both valves were affected in 31%. The majority of patients were treated with combined surgical valve replacement and prolonged antibiotic treatment. Overall survival was 75%. 107 patients (85% of total, 5.94 times more probable) described symptoms for a period longer than 2 months before seeking medical treatment and 32% reported a history of prior infection and proper antibiotic treatment. No association was observed between age, sex, affected valve and history of prior infection.

Conclusions: *Brucella endocarditis* is 5.94 times more likely to occur in a patient with symptoms of brucellosis present for more than two months. Also BE may develop in patients that have a prior infection, were treated properly and considered cured. Thus all patients with Brucellosis should be followed up properly in order to recognize timely a potentially fatal complication, since BE seems to be a late onset complication of the disease.