

# A Note on Cat Scratch Disease

James Wick\*

Department of Internal Medicine, Mount Royal University, Calgary, Canada

Cat scratch disease is a bacterial infection caused by *Bartonella henselae*. It is transmitted by a cat bite or by a scratch. Cat-scratch disease (CSD) is also called as felinosis. Transmission of the bacterium from cat to cat is said to be as cat flea. Cat-scratch disease has a global distribution, but it is non-reportable disease in humans, so the data in public health on this disease are inadequate [1].

Diagnosis of the diseases is generally based on the symptoms that develop in an individual. The best diagnostic method is PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) method, which has a sensitivity of 43-76% and specificity (in a study) of 100% [2]. The symptoms in the infected individual are enlargement of lymph nodes. Most of the individual may also develop symptoms like malaise, loss of appetite, and aches/pains which does not require an antibiotic treatment, but in some individuals, they might develop a serious health problem, including endocarditis, encephalopathy, and osteomyelitis (brain, heart, and bone) [3].

Immunocompromised individuals are at higher risk from pet-transmitted diseases, including cat scratch disease. Nonetheless, they often benefit significantly from pet companionship. If special emphasis is placed on good hygiene in dealing with the pets, the risk can be reduced greatly.

The treatment is supportive. Antibiotics speed healing and are recommended with severe disease or immune problems. Recovery occurs within 4 months but mostly it may require a year. About 1 in 10,000 people are affected and seen more commonly in young children. Most of the healthy individuals clear the infection without any treatment, but in few individuals, the organism disseminate and may infect the eye, central nervous system, spleen, liver.

Although few experts recommend not treating typical CSD (Cat Scratch Disease) in immunocompetent people with mild to moderate illness, treatment of all individuals with antimicrobial agents is suggested because of the disseminated disease probability. The referred antibiotic treatment for this disease is azithromycin. This is the only agent who was studied in a randomized controlled study [4].

Cat-scratch disease can be prevented by taking measures of flea control, washing hands after handling a cat or cat faeces [5].

## References

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\*Address for Correspondence: Wick J, Neurology and Psychiatry, Mount Royal University, Calgary, Canada; E-mail: james\_wick@nic.ac.ca

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