

INTRODUCTION

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Tuberculosis is an ancient disease that can be traced to the early history of humanity (Edwards, 1981).

It remains among the 10 leading causes of death in the world (Smith, 1981). Considerable progress in its control has been achieved in most industrial societies. Its mortality rate had fallen from its original rate of about 5/100,000 population (Nelson, 1979) to about 1.4/100,000 Population (Nelson, 1983) in the United states . In Egypt, the mortality rate is about 8/100.000 (Labib, 1976).

T.B. is still a major paediatric problem in many parts of Africa (Adrele, 1979 & Sharan, G., 1979) It is one of the commonest and most important diseases in childhood (Sutherland, 1985). It occurs all over; the world. In advanced countries, its incidence has declined rapidly since the end of the second world war, but the disease has by no means become a rare occurrence (O'Brien, et al, 1983 & Citron, 1984).

It remains principally a disease of the poor & undernourished, but no one is immune. The disease can affect the rich & the privileged as well (Forfar, 1984).

In general, the younger the patient, the greater the likelihood of activity and dissimulation (Miller, 1984). Another period of increased risk

occurs at and around puberty. Female adolescents have more serious disease than their male counterparts (Nelson, 1983).

Race appears to be a predisposing factor. Blacks has proportionately more cases of extrapulmonary diseases (Hoepferich, 1977) but this may be attributed to low Socioeconomic conditions (Khalil, 1979) low family income, big family size, poor nutritional status of the population (Okeahialam, 1982), illiteracy and low standard of education, also of the intercurrent infections favouring progression rubeala and pertussis are most significant.

The severity of T.B. is enhanced by diabetes mellitus sickle cell disease, lymphoma and other forms of malignancy.

The administration of glucocorticoid drug or ACTH enhance tuberculosis activity and favours dissimulation (Nelson, 1983).

Tuberculosis of childhood must be recognised to be a general disease, signs of which can appear in any part of the body with many different modes of onset (Miller, 1984).

Tuberculosis of the central nervous system is the most serious form of infection with mycobacterium. T.B. This disease was at one time a virtual death sentence and

the few patients who survived paid the price of devastating brain damage. With the advent of chemotherapy, and in particular isoniazid, the outlook has greatly improved (Kennedy, 1985).