A DIPHTHERIA OUTBREAK IN BURI RAM, THAILAND

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Abstract. In May 1996 there was an outbreak of diphtheria in Buri Ram, Thailand which infected 31 patients, 8 males and 23 females. The mean age of the patients was 8 ± 5 years. Seventy-four percent had a history of childhood vaccinations. Common signs and symptoms included fever (100%) which was low grade in 61%, sore throat (90%), upper airway obstruction (3%), and hoarseness (10%). Pseudomembranes (seen in 100%) were located on the tonsils (71%), pharynx (22%), larynx (9.6%), and uvula (6%). The mean duration of symptoms prior to admission was 2 days with a range of 1 to 5 days. Complications included upper airway obstruction (10%) and cardiac complications (10%). There were no neurological complications or deaths. There were negative associations between cardiac complications, severity of disease and previous diphtheria vaccination. The ages varied from children to adults. Early recognition and prompt treatment decreased complications and mortality in this group of patients when compared with Chiang Mai and Queen Sirikit National Institute of Child Health (QSNICH) studies.