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## **Original Article**



# Demographic and Clinico-Pathological Profile of Patients with Acute Pancreatitis in a Tertiary Referral Hospital in Eastern India

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#### **Abstract**

**Background:** Acute pancreatitis (AP) is an inflammatory condition of the pancreas that is painful and potentially lethal disease. It was 1889 when Fitz first described pancreatitis as a nosdogic disease. In 1901, Opie described the association of gallstones to AP in his common channel hypothesis. **Methods:** 100 cases were included in this prospective observational study over a period of 18 months. All patients over 12 years with acute pancreatitis and recurrent cases of acute pancreatitis were included in this study. **Result:** Gallstone induced acute pancreatitis was the commonest etiological type (34%) followed by alcohol (24%). In female gallstone induced pancreatitis was more common (56.3%), while alcohol as a causative agent was seen exclusively in males. In children pancreatic divisum and trauma was the cause of acute pancreatitis. Peripancreatic fluid collection was both the commonest imaging finding and local complication noted and was seen in a significantly higher number of cases in either group. **Conclusion:** Acute pancreatitis has a wide range of etiology and age group. Gall stone is most common overall followed by alcohol and trauma. Mild cases are usually successfully treated conservatively while severe cases need admission and interventions.

Keywords: Acute pancreatitis, pancreatic trauma, pancreas.

### Introduction

It was 1889 when Fitz first described pancreatitis as a nosdogic disease <sup>[1]</sup>. In 1901, Opie described the association of gallstones to AP in his common channel hypothesis <sup>[1]</sup>. Clinico-pathologic classification of pancreatitis came in 1963 <sup>[1]</sup>.

Acute pancreatitis (AP) is an inflammatory condition of the pancreas that is painful and potentially lethal disease with wide variation in severity ranging from mild and self-limiting to a rapidly progressing illness leading to multi organ failure. At one end of the spectrum is the mild variety of acute pancreatitis, which invariably results in 'restitutio ad integrum 'or spontaneous resolution of symptoms and requires supportive therapy only <sup>[2]</sup>. At the other end is the Severe variety which requires aggressive resuscitative and occasionally surgical intervention. In accordance with this wide variation in clinical presentation the treatment of acute pancreatitis requires a multi-disciplinary approach.

Severe acute pancreatitis affecting 10- 15 % of the cases is however associated with severe complication and death. The optimal management of Acute Pancreatitis includes accurate early prediction of the disease severity.

Though the literatures on incidence and prevalence studies of AP are not exhaustive there appears to be much variability between countries and even different regions within one country. Such differences have also been documented in regards to the aetiology and clinico - pathological profile of patients with AP. Some

studies have found a definite increase in the number of patients with the diagnosis of AP, this may be attributed either to increased use of newer diagnostic tools or higher alcohol consumption.3 While alcoholic pancreatitis has been found to be the most common form of AP in the western [3].

The true incidence and prevalence of AP in India is not known as is remains an under-diagnosed disease. The data regarding demographic and clinic-pathological profile of patients with acute pancreatitis from eastern India are few, though we find that admission in our surgical wards.

In this prospective study we have sought to document the epidemiological and clinico-pathological profile of patients with acute pancreatitis attending this referral government teaching hospital in eastern India.

#### Methods

This is a prospective observational study which will be done over one and half years. During this study period all patients admitted in General surgery wards of IPGME&R with the diagnosis of Acute pancreatitis were included.

- 1. Study area- Department of General surgery, IPGME&R and SSKM hospital Kolkata.
- Study population- Patients admitted in general surgery wards of IPGME&R and SSKM hospital with diagnosis of Acute pancreatitis.

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#### **Inclusion Criteria**

- I. Patients admitted in General surgery wards, diagnosed as acute pancreatitis.
- II. Patients with a history of acute pancreatitis, presenting with recurrence (not in the background of chronic pancreatitis) were also included.
- III. Age of the patients more than 12 years.

#### **Exclusion Criteria**

- I. Patients below the age of 12 years.
- II. Patients not willing take part in the study.
- III. Acute episode in patients with chronic pancreatitis
  - 3. Study period-one and half year
  - 4. Sample size-100 cases
  - 5. Study design-prospective observational study
  - 6. Parameters to be studied
  - Demographic profile and known risk factors
    - i. Age
    - ii. Sex
    - iii. Gall stone disease
    - iv. Alcohol intake
    - v. Metabolic- Hypertriglyceridemia, Hypercalcemia
    - vi. History of trauma- post ERCP, blunt abdominal trauma
  - vii. Obstruction- Cystic neoplasm of pancreas, pancreatic divisum
  - viii. Viral infection- mumps, Hepatitis-B
  - ix. Drug intake- furosemide, estrogen, azathioprine etc.

#### Complications:

## Systemic

- 1. ARDS
- 2. Renal failure
- 3. GI haemorrhage
- 4. DIC
- 5. SIRS

## Metabolic

- 1. Hypocalcaemia
- 2. Hyperglycaemia
- 3. Hyper-triglyceridemia

#### Local

- 1. Acute fluid collection
- 2. Pancreatic necrosis
- 3. WON
- 4. Splenic artery pseudoaneurysm

## Biochemical parameters

- i. WBC
- ii. Serum LDH
- iii. Serum AST
- iv. Serum ALT
- v. Serum creatinine
- vi. PaO2/Fio2

## Imaging findings

- i. Pancreatic edema
- ii. Peripancreatic acute fluid collection
- iii. Pancreatic necrosis

- iv. Pancreatic abscess
- v. Pancreatic pseudocyst
- vi. Splenic artery pseudoaneurysm.

## STUDY TOOLS

- i. Questionnaires.
- ii. Clinical examination.
- iii. Biochemical parameters.
- iv. Imaging finding.

# **Results and Analysis**

#### **Statistical Analysis**

Statistical Analysis was performed with help of Epi Info (TM) 3.5.3. EPI INFO is a trademark of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Using this software, basic cross-tabulation, inferences and associations were performed. Means along with the standard deviations were calculated under descriptive analysis.

Test was used to test the association of different study variables with the study groups. In the cases where one of the cell frequencies were less than 5 corrected Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) was used to find the association between variables Z-test (Standard Normal Deviate) was used to test the significant difference between two proportions. t-test was used to compare the means. Odds ratio (OR) with 96% confidence intervals was calculated to find the risk factors. p < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

According to table no. I the mean age (mean  $\pm$  s.d.) of the patients was 34.04 $\pm$ 12.82 years with range 13 -67 years and the median age was 30.0 years.

Test of proportion showed that the proportion of the patients in the age group 20-39 years (59.0%) were significantly higher than other age group (Z=5.02; p<0.0001). Thus, the acute pancreatitis prevalence was most prevalent in the age group 20-39 years. Only 4.0% of the patients were in the age group 60-67 years. In table no. II the ratio of male and female (Male: Female) was 2.2: 1.0. Proportion of male (69.0%) was significantly higher than the females (31.0%) (Z=5.37;<0.001) in our patients' cohort.

In Table no. III corrected Chi-square  $(\chi^2)$  test showed that there was no significant association between age groups and gender of the patients (p=0.22). Thus, the males and females were more or less equally distributed over age. However, females were more prone to have acute pancreatitis at younger age than females. However, t-test showed that there was no significant difference between mean age of males and females (t98=1.39; p=0.16).

According to table IV & V GSIAP (34.0%) was found to be the commonest etiological factor in our series and its incidence was significantly higher than other risk factors (Z=4.16; p<0.001). GSAIP was followed by ALC (24%) as the second most common cause of AP in our patient population. Only 6.0% of the patients had no cause attributable to AP (idiopathic).

In table VI corrected Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test showed that there was no significant association between age and status of GSIAP of the patients (p=0.72). The risk of GSIAP was 1.15 times more among the patients with age  $\geq$ 35 years as compared to the patients with age<35 years but the risk was not significant [OR-1.15 (0.52, 2.54); p=0.72].

In table VII corrected Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test showed that there was significant association between gender and GSIAP of the patients (p<0.00001). The risk of GSIAP was 15.42 times more among the female patients as compared to the male patients and the risk was significant [OR-15.42 (4.79, 49.64); p<0.00001].

According to Table VIII Alcohol as an aetiology of acute pancreatitis was seen exclusively in males (p<0.001)

Table IX describes most of the patients had PPAFC (72.0%) followed by PN (36.0%) WON (31.0%) which were significantly higher than other complications (Z=3.80; p<0.001). Only 5.0% of the patients had PA.

According to Table X as per imaging findings most of the patients had PPAFC (72.0%) followed by PE (60.0%), AS (41.0%)

and PEF (38.0%) which were significantly higher than other findings (Z=7.52; p<0.0001). Only 5.0% of the patients had PA.

According to Table XI as per findings of biochemical markers most of the patients had abnormal amylase (96.0%) followed by Lipase (92.0%), WBC (74.0%) and AST (41.0%) which were significantly higher than other findings (Z=8.58; p<0.0001). Only 24.0% of the patients had abnormal LDH.

Table I: Distribution of Age			
Age (Years)	Number	%	
13 - 19	13	13.00%	
20 - 39	59	59.00%	
40 - 59	24	24.00%	
60 - 67	4	4.00%	
Total	100	100.00%	
$Mean \pm s.d$	34.04±12.82		
Median	30		
Range	13 -67		

Table II: Gender distribution			
Gender	Number	%	
Male	69	69.0%	
Female	31	31.0%	
Total	100	100.0%	
Male: Female	2.2:1.0		

Age Group (in years)	Gender	Gender	
	Male (n=69)	Female (n=31)	
13 – 19	11	2	13
Row%	84.62%	15.38%	100.00%
Col%	15.94%	6.45%	13.00%
20 – 39	37	22	59
Row%	62.71%	37.29%	100.00%
Col%	53.62%	70.97%	59.00%
40 – 59	17	7	24
Row%	70.83%	29.17%	100.00%
Col%	24.64%	22.58%	24.00%
60 – 67	4	0	4
Row%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Col%	5.80%	0.00%	4.00%
TOTAL	69	31	100
Row%	69.00%	31.00%	100.00%
Col%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
$Mean \pm s.d$	35.04±14.20	31.80±8.81	
Median	30	30	
Range	13 - 67	13 - 48	

 $<sup>\</sup>chi^2 = 4.40$ ; p = 0.22 NS- Not Significant

Table IV: Distribution of common risk factors associated with acute pancreatitis			
Risk Factors	Number (n=100)	%	
GSIAP	34	34.00%	
ALC	24	24.00%	
ERCP	11	11.00%	
HTG	8	8.00%	
BLTAB	7	7.00%	
IDIOP	6	6.00%	
OTHERS	10	10.00%	
Total	100	100.00%	

Table V: Association aetiology and gender of the patients					
Risk Factors	Male	Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%	
GSIAP	21	43.8%	27	56.3%	<0.001*
ALC	36	100.0%	0	0.0%	<0.001*
HTG	8	72.7%	3	27.3%	<0.001*
ERCP	7	63.6%	4	36.4%	<0.001*
BLTAB	7	100.0%	0	0.0%	<0.001*
OBST	5	71.4%	2	28.6%	<0.001*
IDIOP	7	100.0%	0	0.0%	<0.001*
HCAL	0	0.0%	3	100.0%	<0.001*
OTHERS	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	<0.001*

Table VI: Association between age and GSIAP			
Age Group (in years)	GSIAP	GSIAP	
	Present	Absent	
≥35	22	22	44
Row%	50.00%	50.00%	100.00%
Col%	45.83%	42.31%	44.00%
<35	26	30	56
Row%	46.43%	53.57%	100.00%
Col%	54.17%	57.69%	56.00%
TOTAL	48	52	100
Row%	48.00%	52.00%	100.00%
Col%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	·		

 $<sup>\</sup>chi^2$ =0.12; p=0.72 NS-Not Significant

Table VII: Association between gender and GSIAP				
Gender	GSIAP	GSIAP		
	Present	Absent		
Female	27	4	31	
Row%	87.10%	12.90%	100.00%	
Col%	56.25%	7.69%	31.00%	
Male	21	48	69	
Row%	30.43%	69.57%	100.00%	
Col%	43.75%	92.31%	69.00%	
TOTAL	48	52	100	
Row%	48.00%	52.00%	100.00%	
Col%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	

 $<sup>\</sup>chi^2 = 27.51$ ; p<0.00001 S-Significant

Table VIII: Association between gender and ALC			
Gender	Alcohol	%	
Female	0	0.0%	
Male	36	100.0%	
TOTAL	36	100.0%	

Table IX: Distribution of local complications associated with acute pancreatitis			
Type of local complications	Number (n=100)	%	
PPAFC	72	72.0	
PN	36	36.0	
WON	31	31.0	
PP	19	19.0	
SAPA	8	8.0	
PA	5	5.0	

Table X: Distribution of imaging findings through CECT			
Imaging findings	Number (n=100)	%	
PPAFC	72	72.0	
PE	60	60.0	
AS	41	41.0	

PEF	38	38.0
PN	36	36.0
WON	31	31.0
PP	19	19.0
SAPA	8	8.0
PA	5	5.0

Table XI: Distribution of findings of biochemical markers			
Findings of Biochemical markers	Number (n=100)	%	
AMYLASE	96	96.0	
LIPASE	92	92.0	
WBC	74	74.0	
AST	41	41.0	
ALT	40	40.0	
PAO <sub>2</sub> /FIO <sub>2</sub>	40	40.0	
CREATININE	26	26.0	
LDH	24	24.0	

#### Discussion

Acute pancreatitis is an acute inflammatory condition of the pancreas, peripancreatic tissue and/ or remote organ systems. It ranges in severity from mild to severe. Though 80% of the cases run a mild course it is potentially a lethal disease. Globally acute pancreatitis is showing a rising annual incidence and is an increasing burden on the constrained healthcare resources [4]. Gallstones and alcoholism are the most common causes worldwide [5]. The increasing incidence of acute pancreatitis worldwide can be attributable to various factors like increase in the incidence of GSD, increasing alcohol consumption, availability of better diagnostic tools and increasing use of ERCP over the last few decades [6].

This study was conducted in I.P.G.M.E & R / S.S.K.M Hospital, Kolkata over one and half year period. This prospective observational non-randomised study included 100 diagnosed cases of acute pancreatitis admitted mostly in Department of Gastroenterology. The aim of study was to assess the demographic profile of patients presenting with acute pancreatitis and its aetiology.

Historical, biochemical and radiological factors were taken into considerations while arriving at the diagnosis of acute pancreatitis. The diagnosis was made when two of the following three features were present:

- Acute onset "stabbing" or "knife-like" epigastric pain of varying severity with radiation towards the back or the flanks
- Serum amylase or lipase at least three times the upper limit of normal.
- Characteristic imaging findings on trans-abdominal USG / Endo-USG or CECT abdomen.

Similarly, the aetiology factors responsible for acute pancreatitis were found out from history, biochemical alterations and suggestive imaging findings. In individuals who had more than one known etiological factors present, only the factor which was in all probability primarily responsible for precipitation of acute pancreatitis was considered for statistical analysis. For example, alcohol is said to be the causative factor if the patient had consumed alcohol shortly before the symptoms started and other possible causes of AP have been excluded.

The majority of the patients in our study were in the age group of 21 - 30 years (59%) and this proportion was found to be statistically significant (Z=5.02; p<0.0001). The mean age of our

patients, irrespective of their gender, was  $34.04\pm12.82$  years (range= 13 -67 years). Only 4% of the patients were in the >60 years age bracket. More than twice as many males were affected as females. The M: F ratio was 2.2:1 and our patient cohort had a significant male preponderance (Z=5.37; p< 0.001). Thus, males were at higher risk of having acute pancreatitis than females.

Almost similar figures as ours with regards to age group affected were quoted by Lankisch et al.<sup>[7]</sup> In his study on 602 patients he found 31-40 years to be the most common age group affected by acute pancreatitis. Our findings are similar to that of Gullo et al whose study on 1,068 patients from five European countries also showed male preponderance (64.8%) <sup>[8]</sup>.

There has been no population-based study in India regarding etiology of pancreatitis, but recent small single-centre based studies showed that alcohol is rising as an etiology of acute pancreatitis [9]. Though regional and demographic variation exists, older studies found gallstones to be the predominant cause. Our study also revealed gallstone induced pancreatitis to be the most common cause of acute pancreatitis. It was seen in 34% (n=34) of our patient cohort. This was followed by alcohol in 24% (n=24) as the second most common cause. Collectively these two factors accounted for 58% of the cases. The proportion of patient with GSIAP was significantly higher than other risk factors (Z=4.16; p<0.001). This preponderance of gallstone disease over alcohol as the commonest aetiological factor of acute pancreatitis was also reported Garg et al from AIIMS, Bhat et al from SGPGI and Zargar et al from Srinagar, Kashmir (they also found biliary ascariasis in 22% cases of acute pancreatitis) [10-12]. Similar figure has also been quoted by Jha et al, Nagarjuna et al also from India [13,14]. Some western studies like those Gomez et al in their study on 151 patient and UoMo G et al also found gallstones as the commonest cause of acute pancreatitis, 77.4% and 69.3% respectively [15,16].

We found GSIAP to be 1.15 times more among the patients with age  $\geq$ 35 years as compared to the patients with age<35 years though the risk was not significant [OR-1.15 (0.52, 2.54); p=0.72]. Bhatia et al also found biliary pancreatitis to be more common amongst older patients [17].

GSIAP was found to be more common in females (56.3%) in our study as because gallstone disease occurs with a higher frequency in females. There was significant association between females' gender and GSIAP (p<0.001) in our study. we found the risk GSIAP was 15.42 times more among the female patients as compared to the male patients. Only other factor which was significantly higher in females was hypercalcemia (p<0.001).

In males, alcohol was the most common cause (n=36) while gall stone induced pancreatitis was the next (n=21). Alcohol as a causative factor was seen exclusively in males in our series. Pelli et al in their study found alcohol as a cause of acute pancreatitis to be more common in younger patients [18].

In children (<15years), pancreatic divisum and trauma were noted to be the cause of acute pancreatitis in our study. Graham et al and Werlin et al have stated trauma and systemic disease as the most common aetiologies of acute pancreatitis in children in their studies<sup>[19,20]</sup>.

Hypertriglyceridemia (8%), ERCP (11%), blunt trauma abdomen (7%), idiopathic (6%) and 10% "Others" (Pancreatic divisum, cystic neoplasm of pancreas, drug induced, hypercalcemia and viral infection) were the distribution of the rest of the etiological factors amongst our patient's cohort.

For correctly diagnosing the local complications the following standardized definitions were considered [21]

- Peripancreatic fluid collection: Fluid that extravasates out of the pancreas during AP into the anterior pararenal spaces and other surrounding areas. It may be associated with pancreatic necrosis as well.
- Pancreatic necrosis: diffuse or focal areas of non-viable pancreatic parenchyma which appears as well marginated zones of non-enhanced areas on CECT involving >30% of the pancreas. It may be infected (demonstration of bacteria or fungi in the necrotic tissue) or non-infected.
- Pancreatic pseudocyst: collection of clear pancreatic juice without any solid material enclosed by nonepithelialized wall of reactive fibrosis which is usually seen after 4 weeks of onset of AP.
- Walled-off necrosis: Necrotic pancreatic or peripancreatic tissue surrounded by an enhancing wall (on CECT) of granulation and fibrous tissue, usually identified after 4 weeks of onset of AP.
- Pancreatic abscess: it is an infected pancreatic pseudocyst.

We only assessed the local complications in this study and not the systemic complications of AP including organ failure. Peripancreatic fluid collection was the most common imaging finding seen in 72 (72%) patients of acute pancreatitis followed by pancreatic edema in 60 (60%) patients and in 41% patients with ascites. The least common imaging finding was pancreatic abscess seen only (5%). The proportion of peri-pancreatic fluid collection as an imaging finding was significantly higher than other findings (Z=7.52; p<0.0001).

Literatures quote the incidence of peri-pancreatic fluid collection to be around 40-50%, somewhat lower than our figure of 72% [22,23].

There is certain limitation inherent to this study like small sample size and a limited catchment area of the patients enrolled in the study. This study may be further enriched by multi-centric study with a large sample size drawn from wider geographical areas and also by including some other variables like systemic complications and severity assessment.

## **Summary & Conclusion**

This prospective observational non-randomised study, conducted over a period of 18 months included 100 diagnosed cases of acute pancreatitis admitted mostly in Department of Gastroenterology.

The aim of the study was to assess the Demographic and clinico-pathological profile of patients with acute pancreatitis.

The following were our observations at the end of the study period.

- 1. The mean age of our patients, irrespective of their gender, was 34.04±12.82 years.
- 2. It was 2.2 times more common in male than female.
- 3. Gallstone induced acute pancreatitis was the commonest etiological type (34%) followed by alcohol (24%).
- 4. In female gallstone induced pancreatitis was more common (56.3%), while alcohol as a causative agent was seen exclusively in males.
- 5. In children pancreatic divisum and trauma was the cause of acute pancreatitis in our study.
- 6. Peripancreatic fluid collection was both the commonest imaging finding and local complication noted in our study and was seen in a significantly higher number of cases in either group.

## **Abbreviations**

AP: Acute Pancreatitis

GSIAP: Gallstone Induced Acute Pancreatitis

ALC: Alcohol

HTG: Hypertriglyceridaemia HCAL: Hypercalcaemia

ERCP: Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangio-Pancreaticography

BLNT ABD: Blunt Abdomen

OBST: Obstruction
PD: Pancreatic Divisum
IDIOP: Idiopathic
OTHRS: Others

RF: Renal Failure

GIH: Gastr Ointestinal Haemorrhage

DIC: Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation SIRS: Systemic Inflammatory Response Syndrome

ARDS: Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome

AFC: Acute Fluid Collection PN: Pancreatic Necrosis

AA: Ascites

PA: Pancreatic Abscess PEF: Pleural Effusion

SAPA: Splenic Artery Pseudoaneurysm

PE: Panceatic Edema

PPAFC: Peripancreatic Acute Fluid Collection

PP: Pancreatic Pseudocyst WON: World Of Necrosis WBC: White Blood Count

Sr. LDH: Serum Lactate Dehydrogenase Sr. AST: Serum Aspartate Transaminase Sr. ALT: Serum Alanine Transaminase

CREAT: Creatinine

### **Declarations**

## Conflict of interest

Authors declares no conflicts of interest.

## Funding/financial support

No funding sources.

## **Ethical Clearance**

The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee.

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