

## **FATAL INFLUENZA A PNEUMONIA IN A 3-YEARS-OLD CHILD – AN AUTOPSY CASE REPORT.**

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**INTRODUCTION:** Family *Myxoviridae* includes the influenza viruses (A and B). Attack rates and severity of influenza are greatest in infants, and adults with cardiopulmonary diseases. Influenza A viruses have been detected to circulating in the São Paulo State, mainly during the winter. Influenza has frequently a benign course, but influenza pneumonia has rarely been detected in patients who died suddenly. **AIM:** To reporting an autopsy case of sudden death of a healthy child due to influenza A pneumonia.

**METHODS:** Autopsy (gross and H&E stain), household interview, and RT-PCR in postmortem blood sample (primers to influenza A and B viruses and enterovirus group [CDC, Atlanta]) were carried out. **RESULTS:** A healthy 3 y-o female child has died suddenly overnight at home, after she had fallen asleep with her mother. The parents told that the child had mild influenza-like symptoms one couple of days before the death. Because the child had been presented good health, pediatric consultation was not accessed. At the autopsy examination, the main pathologic finding was heavy lungs due to extensive edema and consolidation, presenting a beefy appearance to the cut section. On the light microscopy, pulmonary samples showed diffuse damage to the lining epithelium of the alveoli, and fibrinous exudate in the air spaces. Acute splenitis, mild lobular hepatitis, and hyperplasic Peyer's plates in the intestines were observed. Myocardium was normal. RT-PCR showed influenza A viremia, strain H1. No genomic amplification of enteroviruses was detected. **CONCLUSIONS:** This report reinforces the important impact that qualified autopsy services could have on the Public Health. The pathologists must be encouraged to searching infectious agents in postmortem blood, specially in unexpected deaths. Although influenza pneumonia is uncommon, the estimate of fatal influenza virus infection among children is unknown. This diagnosis should be remembered in the approach of respiratory illness in children.

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