

INFECTIOUS DISEASES - II

SCRUB TYPHUS: THE RE-EMERGING INFECTION

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Abstract: *Scrub typhus is an important re-emerging infection caused by the Orientia tsutsugamushi transmitted by the bite of trombiculid mite. The larval stage of the mite (Chigger) can also transmit infection. The clinical manifestation is a triad of fever, myalgia and headache and the spectrum can range from a mild disease to multiorgan dysfunction and death. Eschar is pathognomonic of scrub typhus. Even though difficult to diagnose in early phases, delayed diagnosis is synonymous with complication and death. Doxycycline is the drug of choice which causes rapid defervescence of fever. Prevention can be achieved by avoidance of mite bite.*

Keywords: *Scrub typhus, Doxycycline, Chigger, Eschar.*

Scrub typhus is one of the oldest known mite borne acute febrile illnesses caused by Orientia (Previously known as rickettsia) tsutsugamushi. Literature about scrub typhus which comes from China dates back to 3rd century.¹ World war II was the period during when the understanding of scrub typhus greatly increased because of thousands of cases and deaths in Asia-pacific region.²

Points to Remember

- *Scrub typhus caused by O. tsutsugamushi is transmitted by trombiculid mites and its larva, chigger.*
- *It is characterised by a triad of fever, headache and myalgia.*
- *Eschar is pathognomonic of scrub typhus but the frequency of finding it is variable to the extent of 50%-80%.*
- *Drug of choice is doxycycline.*
- *Prevention is mainly by avoidance of bite of mite as no vaccine or post exposure prophylaxis exist.*

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