Nosocomial Dengue by Mucocutaneous Transmission

To the Editor: Wagner and colleagues report nosocomial dengue transmitted by needlestick and note that it is the fourth case of nosocomial dengue to their knowledge (1). In the same issue of Emerging Infectious Diseases, Nemes and colleagues report a separate case of nosocomial dengue also transmitted by needlestick (2). Three other cases of nosocomial dengue transmission by needlestick have previously been published (3–5).

We have recently published a case of nosocomial dengue infection that was transmitted by mucocutaneous exposure to blood from a febrile traveler who had recently returned from Peru (6). During phlebotomy, a healthcare worker was splashed in the face with the traveler’s blood. Both the traveler and the healthcare worker were subsequently found to have dengue fever with dengue virus type 3. This route of infection is biologically plausible because infection through mucosal surfaces (intranasal and oral routes) has been shown possible for arboviruses (7). In our review of the literature, we also found a report of dengue virus transmission by bone marrow transplantation (8). Other cases of transmission of dengue virus without a mosquito vector have occurred in 5 reported instances of infection in newborns as a result of vertical transmission in a parturient woman (9–12).

We agree that nosocomial transmission of dengue virus–infected mosquitoes to healthcare workers may be exposed to dengue virus–infected mosquitoes outside the clinical setting.

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References

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Barriers to Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease Autopsies, California

To the Editor: The recent article by Louie et al. underscores a more general disparity between the need for autopsies in potential infectious disease deaths and our present national capacity (1). In addition to confirming Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) and allowing the differentiation of classic and variant CJD, autopsies identify previously undetected infections, discover causative organisms in unexplained infectious disease deaths, and provide insights into the pathogenesis.