

## Letter to the Editor

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### Dengue co-infection with *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia*

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Dear Editor,

We would like to discuss the recent report “Dengue co-infection with *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia*” published in the *Australasian Medical Journal*.<sup>1</sup> Srirangaraj et al. reported “an unusual case of *S. maltophilia* blood stream infection in a middle-age female complicated by dengue fever”.<sup>1</sup> Dengue is a common tropical infection that can be concomitant with other diseases, while *S. maltophilia* is an important nosocomial infection that can co-infect any hospitalised patient.<sup>2</sup> The primary concern with co-infection is the effect of on platelet count—both dengue and *S. maltophilia* bacteraemia can result in thrombocytopenia and in the onset of shock.<sup>3</sup>

The combination of dengue and *S. maltophilia* infection is serious and rarely seen in clinical practice. Since severe consequences are possible as a result of this co-infection, we advocate a change in clinical practices in hospitals or clinical environments with poor sanitation, and suggest routine testing in patients with dengue fever in “poor, tropical areas” for co-infections such as *S. maltophilia* bacteremia. Where there is a lack of funding and basic laboratory equipment, simple investigations such as the tourniquet test and complete blood count (CBC) can be useful for testing and diagnosis. In any dengue case, if there is an observation of unexpected neutrophilia from CBC, co-infection by bacteria is a possibility. In cases with confirmed bacterial infection, using a tourniquet can be a simple screening tool for possible co-infection by dengue.

Srirangaraj's patient was treated with a stat dose of ceftriaxone postoperatively, and when the infection was discovered the patient was administered 200mg oral cefixime twice daily.<sup>1</sup> Current guidelines do not suggest postoperative administration of broad-spectrum antibiotics for procedures like thyroidectomies in Southeast Asia. If the co-infection between dengue and bacteria is identified, the standard management is antibiotic treatment aimed at treating the bacterial infection, combined with standard fluid replacement therapy aimed at managing dengue.

Sincerely,

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