Colstridium Difficile Colitis

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Significance of Pathophysiology

The pathophysiology is significant because the toxins produced by C. difficile cause severe inflammation in the bowel and can lead to severe complications. These toxins include toxin A and toxin B, which are responsible for further complications, like toxic megacolon, perforated bowel and peritonitis (Aziz, 2013). These toxins can also cause a systemic effect that can lead to sepsis and death (Wahns & Zuckerbraun, 2014).

Symptoms

- **Severe abdominal pain and tenderness**
- Watery diarrhea lasting greater than 48 hours
- Diaper rash changes
- Acetic acidosis

Implication for Nursing Care

- A patient with suspected or confirmed C.difficile should be immediately placed in a private room with enteric precautions to prevent the spread to others (Headley, 2012).
- Gloves and gown are absolutely necessary, even when in not direct contact with the individual.
- Alcohol based sanitizers do not remove spores completely, so hand washing with soap and water for 15 seconds must be done after removing gloves every time (Aziz, 2013).
- The infected room must be closed daily with a bleach solution because other rooms are infected in killing the spores, which can live on surfaces for months (Headley, 2012).
- The care provider should teach the patient and family about infection control practices to reduce the risk of contracting C. difficile (Headley, 2012).
- The main goal is prevention and early identification of C.difficile infection among the nursing staff.
- The appropriate and discriminate use of antibiotics is paramount to prevention (Wahns & Zuckerbraun, 2014).
- Vancomycin is contraindicated in the administration within the previous 8 weeks increase the risk of C.difficile (Altiero, 2012).
- Patients at an increased risk should be identified and monitored closely for symptoms.
- Some risk factors include:
  - Age > 65 years old
  - Recent antibiotic use
  - Nosocomial exposure
  - Hospitalization
  - Constipation
  - Nasogastric tube
  - Proven pump inhibitors (Naraki, 2013)


References


