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Greece: Infection

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Health Care Infection Crisis in Greece

A Public Health Brief

Geography:

- ❑ Greece is located in Southern Europe on the Ionian and Mediterranean sea; a peninsula with a 3,000 Island Archipelago which borders Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey.

Population:

- ❑ The population is 10,773,253 and 93% are Greek, 98% are Greek Orthodox, and Greece contains 51,091 refugees as of 2016.

Government:

- ❑ Greece is a Parliamentary Republic, 18+ can vote, and power lies in Parliament similar to Western democracies with elections every four years but unlike the US it uses a a general election not an electoral system.

Major Challenges:

- ❑ Refugee influx crisis from the Middle East has left Greece with minimal resources and confusion.
- ❑ Death rate exceeds birth rate; this statistic sends a signal that the country is experiencing some major health crises.
- ❑ Infections caused from the health system and understaffed health care (6.2 physicians/ 1,000 population and 4.8 beds/1,000 pop)³ have led to potentially fatal shortcuts to a safe and secure health department.

Health Issue:

- ❑ Shortage of medical staff and equipment within the health system of Greece due to its relative bankruptcy and huge numbers of refugees thus resulting in subpar care and lethal infections such as septicemia¹.

Epidemiology:

- ❑ Population at risk
 - ❑ Low income citizens seeking medical aid in hospitals and intensive care units.
- ❑ How common is this condition-
 - ❑ “10% of patients in Greece were at risk of developing potentially fatal hospital infections, with an estimated 3,000 deaths attributed to them”(Smith, 2017 para. 3). This is an astronomical number of people who are seeking aid and instead essentially receiving a death sentence.
 - ❑ The amount of people killed by infections is close to the number of people that Greece is accommodating as refugees: “45,451 deaths due to infections were recorded in Greece during the 8-Year period of time.” (Falagas et al. 2013 p. 1).
- ❑ Outcomes
 - ❑ Death, potentially fatal diseases, and debilitating infections.
 - ❑ The high rates of infections in the hospital setting lead to a legitimate fear of the medical care system.

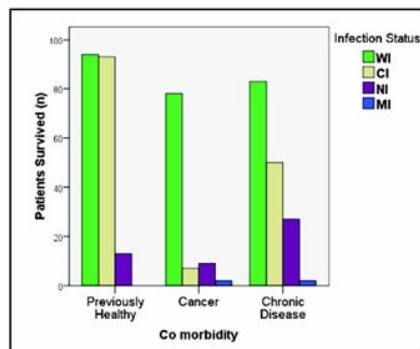


Figure 1.a. Relation of survival rates to co-morbidity and infection groups in PICU.

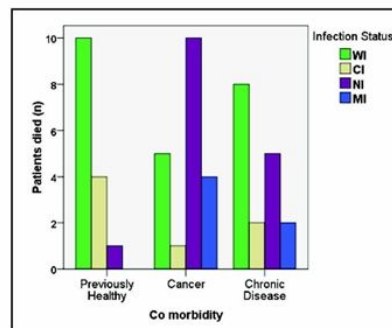


Figure 1.b. Relation of mortality rates to co-morbidity and infection groups in PICU. WI, without infection; CI, community infection; NI, nosocomial infection; MI, mixed infection group.

Information about the Problem:

- ❑ The nature of the Greek health care infection crisis stems from lack of staffing, funds, and supplies.
 - ❑ Greece is attempting to get past this issue by adding funding and more nurses, but the refugee crisis there has caused many issues in these areas.
- ❑ Greece as a whole is struggling to remain financially in check and all departments funded by their government are at risk for issues in the volatile system currently in use.

Suggested Solutions:

- ❑ Provide simple sterilization kits with hospital beds and better inform nurses of the dangers associated with using unsterilized equipment.
 - ❑ Attempt to increase staff marginally but adding more funding to actual sterilization equipment should help solve this issue.
- ❑ Contact and ask for assistance from organizations such as the World Health Organization.
 - ❑ Greece is a second world country and having issues such as this should not be as big a concern as it is.
 - ❑ With all the refugees flooding in from countries such as Turkey the WHO and the World Bank should have an obligation to help places that are experiencing these issues.
- ❑ Public health departments should inform patients of the issues and how everyone can work to fix them.
 - ❑ This is not to insight panic but to create transparency and let the people of Greece know that they are working to create solutions.

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