

Post-operative pyrexia in an orthopaedic unit.

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Abstract:

The causes of post operative pyrexia in an orthopaedic unit was studied prospectively in 520 patients who underwent surgery. Two hundred patients (38.4%) developed postoperative pyrexia as defined by having recorded high temperatures of over 38 degrees C on two occasions within 24 hours (excluding the first 24 hours post-operatively). The commonest causes of post-operative pyrexia were wound infection in 70 (13.4%), respiratory tract infections in 40 (7.6%) and malaria in 30 (5.7%) patients, while other causes were urinary tract infection in 20 (3.8%), thrombophlebitis in 15 (2.8%) and deep vein thrombosis in 15 (2.8%) of the patients; while ten (1.9%) patients had pyrexia of undetermined cause despite exhaustive clinical and laboratory workup. The other associated conditions in patients who developed pyrexia were diabetes mellitus in 20 (3.8%), HIV seropositivity and malignancy in 30 (5.7%) and six (1.1%) patients, respectively.