Common Causes of Pneumonia: Elderly (65+ Years Old)

Pneumonia is an acute or chronic lung condition defined as inflammation of the alveoli or filling of the alveoli with fluid. It is usually caused by bacteria, fungi, viruses and sometimes by physical and chemical irritants. It typically presents with fever, chest congestion, difficulty breathing, cough and sputum. In older adults common causes are Streptococcus pneumoniae, influenza virus, anaerobes, H. influenzae, and gram-negative rods.

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Influenza Virus

Flute Virus

Viruses, specifically influenza account for about 50% of pneumonia cases in the elderly, and are less severe than bacterial pneumonia.

Haemophilus influenzae

He-man In-flute

This gram-negative coccobacilli is a pathogen commonly associated with pneumonia.

Anaerobes

Ant-robe

Bacteria that cannot survive in the presence of oxygen can cause pneumonia through aspiration. Some examples of anaerobes that cause pneumonia through aspiration are Peptostreptococcus, Fusobacterium, Prevotella, and Bacteroides.

Streptococcus pneumoniae

Stripper Nude-Mona

This gram-positive, lancet shaped, alpha hemolytic, optochin sensitive, bile soluble, diplococci presents as a typical pneumonia except for the identifying symptom of rusty colored sputum. It is one of the common causes of pneumonia in everyone >4 weeks of age.

Gram-Negative Rods

Graham-cracker Negative-devil with Rods

Klebsiella, E. Coli, Pseudomonas, and Legionella pneumophila are common gram-negative rods responsible for causing pneumonia in the elderly.

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