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Risk factors for Nipah virus encephalitis in Bangladesh.

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Nipah virus (NiV) is a paramyxovirus that causes severe encephalitis in humans. During January 2004, twelve patients with NiV encephalitis (NiVE) were identified in west-central Bangladesh. A case-control study was conducted to identify factors associated with NiV infection. NiVE patients from the outbreak were enrolled in a matched case-control study. Exact odds ratios (ORs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were calculated by using a matched analysis. Climbing trees (83% of cases vs. 51% of controls, OR 8.2, 95% CI 1.25-infinity) and contact with another NiVE patient (67% of cases vs. 9% of controls, OR 21.4, 95% CI 2.78-966.1) were associated with infection. We did not identify an increased risk for NiV infection among persons who had contact with a potential intermediate host. Although we cannot rule out person-to-person transmission, case-patients were likely infected from contact with fruit bats or their secretions.

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