

Infectious arthritis is an inflammation of one or more joints that occurs as a result of infection by bacteria, viruses or, less frequently, fungi or parasites. The symptoms of Infectious arthritis depend upon which agent has caused the infection but symptoms often include fever, chills, general weakness, and headaches, followed by inflammation and painful swelling of one or more joints of the body. Any disease-causing microbe may infect a joint. Bacteria are most often responsible, typically producing an acute arthritic attack. In young children the most common bacteria are staphylococci, haemophilus influenzae, and gram- negative bacilli. Older children and adults are most commonly infected with gonococci, staphylococci, streptococci or pneumococci. Acute infectious arthritis at any age may be associated with rubella, mumps or hepatitis B infections. Fungi and fungi-like bacteria such as mycobacterium tuberculosis, etc may cause chronic infectious arthritis. People with rheumatoid arthritis and chronically inflamed joints are particularly susceptible to infectious arthritis. Infectious arthritis can affect people of all ages and both sexes. About half of all cases involve adults over the age of 60. The incidence is reported as 2-10 cases per 100,000 of general population. For patients with immunologic disorders, the incidence increases to about 30-70 cases per 100,000 people. In gonococcal arthritis, the disorder is found in three times as many women as men. A thorough history and physical examination are essential for diagnosis. Blood tests as well as tests of the fluid commonly found in the joints are essential for identification of the infecting agent and to confirm diagnosis. Once the infecting agent is known, an appropriate course of treatment may be designed.