Tubercular Nodular Episcleritis

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ABSTRACT

A 12-year-old male child suffering from pain, redness, blurring and watering of right eye since six months was diagnosed as suffering from nodular episcleritis probably tuberculosis. Diagnosis was supported by the additional finding of enlarged cervical lymph node found on aspiration cytology. Complete resolution occurred after anti-tuberculosis therapy.

Key words: Episcleritis, Tuberculosis, Anti-tuberculosis treatment.

INTRODUCTION

World Health Organization (WHO) declared tuberculosis (TB) as a “Global Emergency”. TB may cause disease in all parts of the human body including eyes. In the eye, detecting TB is difficult because it is uncommon and usually not suspected, histological examination may not be possible because biopsy leads to severe complications, like keratitis, cataract and loss of vision.

CASE REPORT

A 12-year-old boy presented with complaints of pain, redness of right eye with blurring of vision and watering of eye since six months. He had received antibiotics and steroid eye drops and anti-inflammatory eye ointments without any relief. He was examined by the ophthalmologist. His right eye was red, tender with nodular opacity in the centre of congestion. A pinkish nodule of 3mm size was found at 3-4 mm from limbus and moving freely with conjunctiva and episcleral tissue (Figure 1A). Visual acuity was 6/6 in both eyes. Slit lamp examination showed involvement of episclera. Cornea was clear and uveal tissue was not involved. A diagnosis of nodular episcleritis was made. Cotton swabs were taken for bacterial culture and acid-fast bacilli but were negative. Biopsy was not attempted in view of possible damage to the sclera. He also had an enlarged, non-tender solitary upper cervical lymph node in the neck. No other group of lymph nodes were palpable. Fine needle aspiration cytology of cervical lymph node showed caseous necrosis, clusters of epithelioid cells, occasional Langerhans type of giant cells and polymorphous population of lymphoid cells comprising of immunoblasts, lymphoblasts and...
Episcleritis is a benign and bilateral condition and underlying systemic cause is found in a minority of cases.

Diagnostic tests like hemagglutination, flocculation and agar gel methods to detect TB have been disappointing. Topical vasoconstricting agents were not used to avoid rebound phenomenon. Topical corticosteroids were avoided because of a risk of steroid glaucoma and cataract. Evidence of TB elsewhere, as in our case, is presumptive evidence of tubercular aetiology and was confirmed by therapeutic response to ATT. Early diagnosis and treatment is necessary to prevent a decrease in visual acuity. Delayed treatment of episcleritis leads to cataract and macular changes and optic disc changes.

Evidence of episcleritis should lead to a search for evidence of active tubercular disease in other parts of the body. Early diagnosis is necessary to start correct treatment to ensure complete response without serious complications.

**REFERENCES**