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Guillain-Barré Syndrome Following Primary Infection With Varicella Zoster Virus

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Introduction: Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) is an acute, immune-mediated polyradiculoneuropathy, usually triggered by an infectious episode, mostly of viral origin. Varicella zoster virus (VZV) is a rare cause of GBS, mainly in the case of latent infection reactivation. We present a case of a patient who developed GBS following chickenpox, after a short period of latency.

Case Report: A 23 years old man of Indian origin presented with bilateral lower limb weakness, numbness, difficult to ambulate, headache and slurred speech for the past 3 days. The patient had a history of 2 weeks of chickenpox rash prior to this but did not seek any treatment. Neurological examination showed bilateral facial nerve palsies with bulbar involvement. Muscle tone was decreased with weakness particularly over lower limb (4/5). Deep tendon reflexes were absent but sensation remains intact. Investigations revealed a normal computed tomography scan of the brain. The cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) was acellular and glucose normal, but CSF protein was high. Patient was treated with intravenous immunoglobulin for 5 days. Progressive neurological improvement occurred and resolution of paresthesias and weakness.

Conclusion and Discussion: VZV is a rare antecedent for GBS but this patient had all the significant clinical features found in GBS. Varicella zoster is associated with dreaded neurological complications. Varicella is easy to diagnose with typical rash and pain and it should be treated with antiviral immediately so as to prevent or reduce such complications.

Obtaining a full medical history and a complete neurological examination still play a vital role to make a correct diagnosis. Furthermore the immune compromised or at high risk patients may be immunized.

Biography:

Muhamad Syafiq Bin Mohammed Khalil is a medical officer with more than 5 years of experience in healthcare industry. He received his M.D from First Moscow State Medical University on 2013 and began his internship in the same year at Seremban Hospital, Malaysia. His particular area of interest is in emergency medicine. He recently did an oral presentation with topic regarding "difficult airway" during the 5th International Clinical Conference in Emergency Medicine (ICCEM) 2017 in Kuala Lumpur. He currently resides in Selangor, Malaysia.