

Recurrent HSV-1 Virus Infection Complicated with Recalcitrant Headache Treated with Acyclovir

Sir,

Previous publications have shown that Herpes virus (HSV) types 1 and 2 may produce different neurologic complications in patients infected with these viruses, more frequently in those associated with HSV-2 (1, 2). Acyclovir is an antiviral agent, relatively specific for herpes simplex, which is remarkable for its lack of toxicity. During the last few years it has been shown to be beneficial both in short term treatment of primary episodes of herpes simplex infections and in suppression of recurrences by continuous medication (3).

The patient reported in the present investigation had recurrent episodes of HSV-1 virus infections complicated with recalcitrant headache but was successfully treated with acyclovir.

CASE REPORT

A 45-year-old married woman was admitted to the dermatological department for recurrent labial herpes simplex infections. For the past 12 years she had had on average 12 recurrences a year, generally related to her monthly periods. Gradually, the number of recurrences increased, and by the time of her first visit to the clinic in 1990, she had 24 recurrences a year. A severe, nearly constant headache was localised to the left mandibular and maxillary branches of the trigeminal nerve with a radiation to the temporal and parietal regions. HSV-1 virus was repeatedly detected by ELISA technique.

Over the past 7 years she had several times a year visited a general practitioner for her headache. X-ray examinations of maxillary sinus was repeatedly performed without result. Dental control uncovered a necrotic pulp, the treatment of which had no effect on her headache. Dental amalgam was replaced by composite, still without effect on her headache. Daily she consumed 8–10 g acetylsalicylic acid as well as several other analgetics, such as codeine, coffeine, paracetamol and other NSAID drugs. Acupuncture was also tried. Neurologic examination did not elucidate the matter, and on suspicion of migraine she was treated with ergotamine without success.

Finally her headache was considered a complication to the recurrent HSV-1 infections, and she was treated with 200 mg acyclovir five times a day with excellent effect. Her HSV-1 infections and headache dis-

appeared and analgetics were no longer used. She resumed her work as an occupational therapist and was considered cured.

DISCUSSION

Studies of periodic headache combined with other neurologic manifestations as a complication of HSV-2-induced meningitis have recently been published (4, 5). Among those cases with periodic headache, however, some were not diagnosed as meningitis. Neurologic complications to HSV-1 infections are more seldom reported, but a few cases have been published (4). The severe headache in this case was at first not correlated to recurrent HSV-1 infections, but the peroral administration of acyclovir disclosed the pathogenesis.

REFERENCES

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4. Craig CPC, Nahmias AJ. Different patterns of neurologic involvement with herpes simplex virus types 1 and 2: Isolation of herpes simplex virus type 2 from Buffy Coat of two adults with meningitis. *J Infect Dis* 1973; 127: 365–372.
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Die XIII. Fortbildungswoche für Praktische Dermatologie und Venerologie wird vom **26 bis 31 Juli 1992** im Sheraton-Hotel, München stattfinden. Auskunft erteilt Prof. Dr. M. Meurer, Dermatologische Klinik der LMU, Frauenlobstr. 9–11, 8000 München 2, Germany. Tel: (089) 51604631.

The Second Annual Meeting of the European Tissue Repair Society will be held in Malmö on **August 26–28, 1992**. For further information please contact K. Jönsson, Department of Surgery, Malmö Allmänna Sjukhus, S-214 01 Malmö, Sweden. Phone: +46 40 331846, Fax: +46 40 927877. Deadline for abstracts is on April 1, 1992.

Third Dermatopathology Self Assessment Workshop will be held in Rome, Italy on **September 17–19, 1992**. For further information please contact: Guido Massi, MD, Department of Pathology, Catholic University, Lago F. Vito, 1, I-00168 Rome, Italy. Tel: (6) 3303481/30154270/5759733, Fax (6) 3051343.

British Society for Investigative Dermatology will be held in Sheffield on **September 24–25, 1992**. Abstracts are invited for consideration by the Selection Committee. Official abstract forms and further information will be available in early April from Mrs R. Barton, BSID, P.O. Box 1773, London E17 9LW. The closing date for receipt of completed abstract forms will be Friday 15th May, 1992. The meeting will include sessions with expert introductions on immune diseases and biology of the pilosebaceous unit, for which abstracts are particularly invited. Non members are welcome to attend.

Skin Therapy Forum – A Further Look will be held in the University of Wales College of Medicine, Cardiff on **October 25–28, 1992**. The following sessions will be included: New molecules for old diseases; New indications for old molecules; Principles, practice and ethics of clinical trials; Surgery treatment; Management of patients with difficult diseases. For abstract forms and further information please contact: Mrs Joy Hayes, Department of Dermatology, University of Wales, College of Medicine, Heath Park, Cardiff CF4 4XN, United Kingdom.