Rituximab

Mild encephalopathy with a reversible splenial lesion syndrome: case report

A 33-year-old man developed mild encephalopathy with a reversible splenial lesion syndrome (MERS) during treatment with rituximab for impure nephrotic syndrome.

The man was diagnosed with IgG4-related disease (IgG4-RD) since 2017. He was treated with unspecified corticosteroid therapy for 2 months. However, after 6 months of corticosteroid initiation, he developed an oedema of the lower limbs with haematuria. Based on a corticosteroid-resistant IgG4-RD, he was diagnosed with impure nephrotic syndrome. He was admitted to the hospital to receive rituximab infusion for impure nephrotic syndrome. During the course of rituximab infusion 1g, he developed an acute headache and a hypertensive peak which regressed spontaneously. After 6h of rituximab infusion, he developed paresthesias of the left lower limb along with ataxia on walking. Physical examination revealed fever with a rapid alteration of consciousness and confusion. He was vomiting with myoclonus and tremulation. He was polypneic with crackles at the lung bases. A lumbar puncture showed a clear fluid, presence of 100 white elements with 94 lymphocytes and proteinorrachia at 0.8g/L. After 2h, he presented a status epilepticus.

The man was admitted to intensive care with intubation and mechanical ventilation. A cerebral angio-MRI revealed high signal intensity on FLAIR and ADC. Various laboratory investigations were conducted, however no significant results were obtained. He was treated with methylprednisone, IV immune-globulin [immunoglobulin] and sodium valproate. After 48h, he was extubated after a gradual recovery of his state of consciousness. The Naranjo probability scale score was measured which revealed a score of 2. Using this scale, the diagnosis of rituximab-induced MERS was possible. He was discharged in a good condition and treated with azathioprine.

1. Atig A, et al. L’encephalopathie avec lesion reversible du splenium (MERS), s’agit-il d’un nouveau effet secondaire du Rituximab ?. Revue de Medecine Interne 42 (Suppl. 2): Dec 2021. Available from: URL: http://doi.org/10.1016/j.revmed.2021.10.130.

**Editorial comment:** Details of this case report have previously been published and processed for Adis PV [See 1].