E-Poster

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The Role of Rehabilitation in an Exuberant Case of Pediatrics Chorea

Topic: Health Conditions (Nervous System, Musculoskeletal System, Cardiopulmonary System)

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BACKGROUND

Chorea is a complex movement disorder characterized by involuntary, irregular, and non-repetitive movements. Sydenham chorea (SC) is the most prevalent form of chorea in children, particularly in regions with high rates of rheumatic fever. It is an autoimmune complication of untreated group A beta-hemolytic streptococcal infections, typically manifesting weeks to months post-infection, affecting children aged 5–15 years, with a higher prevalence in females. Clinical features include involuntary and irregular movements and neuropsychiatric symptoms.

CASE DESCRIPTION

We present a case of a previously healthy 12-year-old female who developed generalized involuntary movements interfering with all daily activities, including gait, speech and swallowing. One month prior to the symptom onset, she experienced odynophagia, which was treated symptomatically.

Initial evaluation revealed truncal instability, almost persistent choreiform movements affecting her limbs, trunk and tongue, without other neurological or systemic abnormalities. These movements were of considerable amplitude, impacting her balance and functionality, including the ability to walk, while being absent during sleep. Imaging, echocardiogram, cerebrospinal fluid analysis, and electrophysiological studies were unremarkable. Although anti-streptolysin O was negative, based on the clinical presentation and imaging and laboratory tests, SC was proposed as the most likely treatable cause, leading to the initiation of penicillin and valproate.

A comprehensive rehabilitation plan was implemented, focusing on medical and functional management, including speech therapy for articulation and swallowing, and physiotherapy targeting trunk control, balance, and gait. Dietary modifications, such as thickened liquids, were introduced to address swallowing difficulties. A wheelchair was provided for safe mobility at home. Clear recommendations were given to the family and school regarding activity limitations due to the risk of falls. Significant improvement in motor and functional abilities was achieved, although mild dependency in daily living activities persists - imbalance during directional changes and requires assistance with certain tasks, such as eating and bathing.

DISCUSSION

This case highlights the importance of early diagnosis and a multidisciplinary approach in SC. Pharmacological treatment, along with rehabilitation, played a crucial role in restoring function and autonomy for affected patients. Ongoing rehabilitation will be essential to consolidate and optimize functional gains and improve quality of life in movement disorders like SC.

CONCLUSION

This case highlights the critical importance of early diagnosis and a multidisciplinary approach in managing SC. Prompt pharmacological treatment and rehabilitation facilitated significant functional recovery, addressing both motor symptoms and overall reintegration. Continued rehabilitation is essential to optimize outcomes, promote autonomy, and enhance the quality of life for patients.

Statement of Disclosures

None

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