

Purtscher-like Retinopathy in Eclampsia—A Case Report

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ABSTRACT

Purtscher-like retinopathy is a rare condition in preeclampsia which can result in persistent visual impairment. Incidence is 0.24 case/million population annually in United Kingdom. However, as many cases are asymptomatic, the actual reported incidence may be less. There are no data available regarding incidence in Tanzania population. Here, we report a case of Purtscher-like retinopathy in an antenatal mother who presented with eclampsia to the maternity ward at Kinyonga District Hospital at Kilwa district. Lindi, Tanzania.

Keywords

Purtscher-like retinopathy, Preeclampsia, Eclampsia, Pregnancy complications, Retinal microvascular disease, Visual impairment, Obstetric ophthalmology, Case report, Tanzania.

Introduction

Purtscher-like retinopathy is a sight threatening ocular condition. Incidence is 0.24 case/million population annually in United Kingdom. Postpartum visual impairment is often associated with preeclampsia or eclampsia and the symptoms are generally transient. This is due to retinal ischemia or infarction and is known as Purtscher-like retinopathy. Clinical manifestations are typically bilateral. Pathogenesis is by retinal arteriolar embolization by leukocyte aggregation in response to complement activation. Apart from the treatment of precipitating conditions, there are no specific treatment guidelines at present.

Case Report

A 18 years old female primi gravida at 36 weeks of amenorrhoea admitted in maternity ward at Kinyonga District Hospital Kilwa, Lindi Tanzania with the complaint of episodes of tonic clonic generalized seizures for about 1 hour prior to admission associated with alter of level of consciousness. Her blood pressure was recorded as 174/117mmHg. Laboratory investigations showed low haemoglobin level, low platelet count, elevated liver enzymes, raised PT and INR, and elevated lipid levels.

Diagnosis of Eclampsia with HELLP syndromes made. She was treated magnesium sulphate, and anti hypertensive. An emergency Caesarean section was done with outcome of Alive baby boy with APGAR score of 7 in first minutes and 9 in 5 minutes with birth weight of 2300grams. On the second day syndrome. Once she regained full consciousness and recovering from anesthesia, the patient complained of defective vision in both eyes more severe at right eye and was referred for an ophthalmologist opinion. On ocular examination, her best corrected visual acuity was 1/60 with sluggish reacting pupils and colour vision defective in both eyes. Dilated fundus examination showed multiple discrete retinal infarcts involving the macula and few retinal haemorrhages in both eyes OCT was done and it showed hyper-reflective intra retinal layers. Based on the clinical examination, she was diagnosed with Purtscher-like retinopathy due to eclampsia and was managed conservatively.

Discussion

Purtscher retinopathy is a rare ophthalmological condition with unclear pathogenesis. Preeclampsia may compromise the microvascular circulation and this may affect various organs, such as cerebral, placental, hepatic, renal, and ocular functions. Visual symptoms occur in approximately 25% of patients with preeclampsia and 19–45% of patients with eclampsia. Patients with Purtscher retinopathy usually present within 48 hours postpartum. Purtscher retinopathy is a rare condition usually associated with

trauma which is usually unilateral. However, this can also occur in other conditions, like acute pancreatitis, fat embolism, renal failure, connective tissue disorder with vasculitis, preeclampsia, and childbirth. Purtscher-like retinopathy is used to describe retinopathy seen in conditions other than trauma. Most cases recover spontaneously in one to three months after the systemic disease resolves. Visual prognosis is variable.

Miguel et al. introduced the first diagnostic criteria which include the presence of Purtscher flecken, the presence of flame-shaped or dot-and-blot retinal haemorrhages, the presence of cotton-wool spots, reasonable aetiology, and compatible complementary investigation. At present, no clear guidelines exist for the treatment of Purtscher-like retinopathy. Some case reports show treatment with high doses of intravenous steroids which is controversial.

The prognosis of Purtscher-like retinopathy depends on the disease severity at presentation. Complications that can manifest in patients with Purtscher-like retinopathy include optic atrophy, mottling of the retinal pigmented epithelium, retinal thinning, and narrowing of retinal arteries [1-3].

Conclusion

Purtscher-like retinopathy is common with eclampsia. Some case reports with Purtscher-like retinopathy after preeclampsia with acute pancreatitis were observed. Pre-eclampsia may cause permanent visual impairment after childbirth. Whenever the patient complains of visual disturbance in preeclampsia or eclampsia, urgent ophthalmological evaluation is mandatory to rule out such rare causes, like Purtscher retinopathy.

Declaration of Patient Consent

The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms. In the form, the patient has/have given her consent for her images and other clinical information to be reported in the journal. The patient understands that her name and initial will not be published and due efforts will be made to conceal her identity.

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