



Coexistence of Giant Cell Arteritis with Aortitis and Sweet's Syndrome: Is It a Coincidence?

Abir Derbel^{1*}, Chifa Damak¹, Mouna Snoussi¹, Faten Frikha¹, Slim Charfi²,
Raida Ben Salah¹, Moez Jallouli¹, Tahya Boudawara², Sameh Marzouk¹
and Zouhir Bahloul¹

¹Department of Internal Medicine, Hedi Chaker Hospital, 3029 Sfax, Tunisia.

²Department of Anatomopathology, Habib Bourguiba Hospital, 3029 Sfax, Tunisia.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author AD designed the case and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors ZB and CD managed and corrected the case. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/AJARR/2021/v15i330373

Editor(s):

(1) Dr. Maria Luisa Kennedy Rolon, Universidad Nacional de Asunción, Paraguay.

Reviewers:

(1) Jin Gao, WSU College of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences, USA.

(2) Yi-Teng Hung, Chang Gung Memorial Hospital, Taiwan.

Complete Peer review History: <http://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/67430>

Received 01 February 2021

Accepted 06 April 2021

Published 15 April 2021

Case Report

ABSTRACT

Sweet's syndrome (SS) is a rare disorder characterized by dermal infiltration by neutrophils. It has been reported in association with drugs, malignancies, infections, rheumatoid diseases, inflammatory bowel diseases. Its association with giant cell arteritis (GCA) hasn't been reported to our knowledge. The diagnosis of GCA was based on inflammatory biological syndrome with aortitis with negative infectious investigations. Herein, we present an unusual case of SS associated with GCA treated with steroids with good outcomes.

Keywords: Aortitis; Sweet's syndrome; giant cell arteritis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sweet's syndrome (SS) is a rare disorder characterized by fever, neutrophilic

leukocytosis, painful plaques on skin and dermal infiltration by neutrophils. Many associations have been reported in the literature, including malignancies, drugs, HIV infections,

*Corresponding author: Email: abirderbel@gmail.com;

inflammatory bowel diseases, Behçet's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, thyroid disease. Its association with giant cell arteritis (GCA) has not been reported to our knowledge. This case represents an unusual case of SS associated with GCA treated with steroids with good outcomes.

2. CASE REPORT

A 67 year-old woman who had no medical history was hospitalized in April, 2018 in our department of internal medicine, for survey of aortitis.

The patient suffered from general weakness, weight loss tenderness over large joints (shoulder girdle, knees) and insomniac paroxysmic headaches for one month. She had no ocular manifestations. In our department, her blood pressure was 100/60 mmHg in the two arms. Her pulse was at 80 beats per minute (bpm). Physical examinations including peripheral pulses in neck, arms and in temporal arteries showed wide and symmetric pulses. Skin examination found bilateral infiltrated

erythematous plaques on the palms of the hands. Skin biopsy confirmed the diagnosis of Sweet's syndrome with evidence of dense dermal neutrophil infiltration: neutrophilic infiltrate with dermal edema, perivascular and interstitial infiltrate composed predominately of neutrophils and histiocytes (Fig. 1).

Biochemical findings revealed increased erythrocyte sedimentation rate (125 mm /hour) and elevated C-reactive protein (CRP) (146 mg/dL); Blood cell count showed white cell count at 11000/ μ L, haemoglobin at 10.5 g/dL, platelets of 320000/ μ L. Liver function tests were normal. Abdominal magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) revealed thickening of the aortic wall with late peripheral contrast uptake and peri-aortic fat infiltration, with hyposignal T1-weighted sequence and hyper-signal T2-weighted sequence, from T12 to L3. These findings were concordant with aortitis (Fig. 2). Infectious investigations including viral hepatitis, hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), tuberculosis, syphilis serology, and widal-wrights tests were

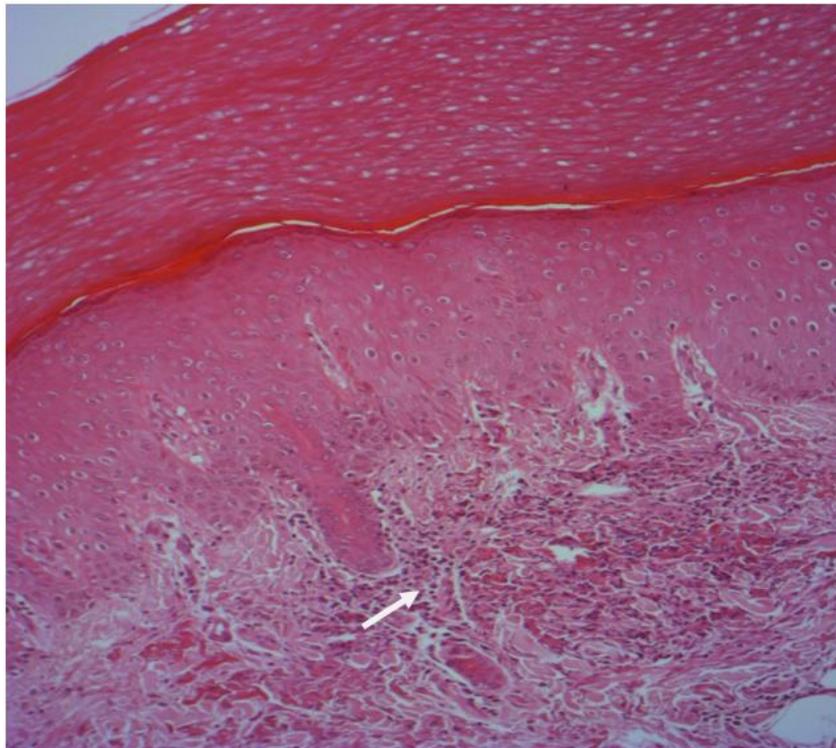


Fig. 1. Diffuse neutrophilic and histiocytic dermal infiltrate in reticular dermis. Epidermis is normal. (HE x 200)



Fig. 2. Axial section of abdominal MRI: Thickening of the aortic wall with late peripheral contrast uptake and peri-aortic fat infiltration, with hyper-signal T2-weighted sequence, concordant with aortitis

negatives. Temporal artery biopsy was normal. The diagnosis of GCA with sweet's syndrome was retained. Corticosteroids were started at a high dosage (1 mg/Kg/day) for 1 month then progressively digressed until 10 mg/day of prednisone. The outcome was favorable and she had no headaches. Skin lesions disappeared. Inflammatory markers were within normal ranges (CRP=5). During her check-up, she had no complaints. She developed diabetes and osteoporosis. After total duration of 32-months steroids intake, MRI will be done to control aortitis and steroids will be stopped.

3. DISCUSSION

GCA is agranulomatous vasculitis involving large and medium vessels, especially the extra-cranial branches of the carotid arteries. It is the most common vasculitis in adults affecting people more than 50 years [1].

The frequency of aortitis in GCA is underestimated. Aortitis represents a serious complication because of the risk of aneurism, rupture and/ or dissection. It can be observed in first presentation or occurs as a delayed complication. When it's presents at the time of diagnosis of GCA, it seems to be associated with high risk of relapses and higher long-term vascular mortality rate [2]. Therefore, the screening of aortitis lesions at GCA diagnosis by

an aortic CT-scan is recommended [2]. Imaging studies showed signs of infra-clinical aortitis in 20 to 65% of cases at diagnosis [3]. Aortitis secondary to GCA is characterized in histological analysis by inflammation in media and adventitia with the presence of necrosis in the media and multifocal or transmural infiltrates of lymphocytes, histiocytes, neutrophils and polynuclear giant cells [4]. In our case, clinical findings including headaches, deteriorated general status, and inflammatory biological syndrome were suggestive of GCA. Temporal artery biopsy wasn't contributive. Good outcome with steroid therapy was an agreement in favor of diagnosis. Our patient also had sweet's syndrome (SS) which was diagnosed simultaneously with GCA. SS is characterised by fever and erythematous painful nodules, plaques, and/or papules localized on the face, trunk and limbs [5]. It may be associated with systemic diseases such as dermatomyositis, Sjögren's syndrome, Behçet's disease, and takayasu arteritis. Its pathogenesis is still unknown. Autoimmune and infectious factors seem to be involved [6]. The association of SS with GCA and involvement of the aorta has not been reported. The validity of the coexistence of these two diseases remained to be established. Few cases reported the coexistence of aortitis associated with SS had been published [7,8]. In fact, vasculitis may be observed in SS, [9] leading us to question if the aortitis is a part of SS or GCA

or both. Arthralgia also could be multifactorial. They are observed in both SS and GCA. Articular manifestation could be seen in 20 to 30% of adult patients with SS [10,11]. Although the etiology of SS is not completely understood, an inflammatory component was involved. There is no consensus about treatment of aortitis in GCA or SS, but may be effective for systemic steroids [2,12]. In our case, we noticed persistent clinical and biological improvement after total duration of 32 months of steroids. Radiological control is scheduled before their stop.

4. CONCLUSION

The association of inflammatory diseases such as Sweet's syndrome and giant cell arteritis is unclear and even with involvement of the aorta. Neurological manifestations, abnormal blood pressure with specific skin findings in elders must lead us to suspect giant cell arteritis and normal temporal artery biopsy couldn't totally exclude the diagnosis. Both diseases had good outcome with steroids if diagnosed and treated early.

CONSENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

As per international standard or university standard guideline participant consent and ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the authors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all those who provided assistance, preparation and funding for the manuscript.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
<http://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/67430>