

HERPES GESTATIONIS IN TRIPOLI (LIBYA) (Clinical study of twelve cases)

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The present report is an analysis of 12 cases of herpes gestationis seen in Tripoli (Libya) over a period of four years, with special emphasis on clinical features. In one case the disease occurred in alternate pregnancies.

Key words: Herpes gestationis, Tripoli.

A review of 12 cases of herpes gestationis seen over a period of 4 years in Tripoli (Libya) is presented.

Materials and Methods

All patients were admitted to the ward. The diagnosis in each case was based on clinical features, histopathological findings and the course of the disease. Immunologic studies were not available.

Results

All the patients were Libyan nationals. The youngest patient was 21 years and the eldest 39 years. Nine patients came with first attack, while 2 with second and, 1 with third attack of the disease. Six patients had onset in second trimester of pregnancy and 5 had it in third trimester, while 1 patient had onset of the disease 5 days after delivery. Three patients had onset of the disease during first pregnancy while the other patients developed it first time in third to eighth pregnancy. Among the

patients with multiple attacks, 2 patients had the disease in subsequent pregnancies, while the third patient had recurrence of the disease in alternate pregnancies i.e. 1st, 3rd and 5th. All the patients except one had intense itching. The first lesions appeared on the abdomen around the umbilicus in 7 patients and on the extremities in the rest of the patients.

Three patients had only tense vesiculo-bullous lesions, while 3 others had moderately erythematous plaques with raised margins. Rest of the patients had both types of lesions. One of the patients had urticarial lesions in addition. The lesions were generalized in all the patients with predominance on the abdomen, especially around the umbilicus. All the patients had lesions on the extremities, more on the flexural aspects. Three patients had tense vesiculo-bullous lesions on the palms and soles also. Mucous membranes were not involved in any of the cases but 3 patients had vesicular lesions on the lips.

Routine laboratory investigations were within normal limits, except that 3 patients had mild eosinophilia (7%, 10% and 15%) and 2 were moderately anaemic.

Eight patients with extensive lesions improved after treatment with systemic prednisolone (initial dose 40 mg). In all cases, the lesions reappeared after discontinuation of corticosteroids. Four patients with a few lesions improved with local corticosteroids

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and systemic antihistaminics. Complete remission was not observed in any of the cases during pregnancy.

Three patients showed complete clearance of the lesions 2 weeks after the delivery, while 5 after 4-6 weeks. Three patients had a few lesions till 3-4 months after the delivery. One patient who developed the disease immediately after the delivery, showed complete clearance after 3 months. The severity of presentation and total duration of the disease did not bear any relation to lactation in our cases.

Comments

In our cases the disease was always associated with pregnancy, however the cases of herpes gestationis in association with hydatidiform mole^{1,2} and chorionic car-

cinoma² have been reported. Association of herpes gestationis with a change in the sexual partner has also been reported in five cases.³ None of our patients had this type of relationship. Usually herpes gestationis develops in all subsequent pregnancies after its first attack. One of our patients developed the disease in alternate pregnancies i.e. 1st, 3rd and 5th. Similar cases have been reported by Holmes et al.³

References

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