

HYPERSENSITIVITY TO TETANUS TOXOID INJECTION

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A case of anaphylactoid reaction following tetanus toxoid injection is reported.

Key words : Tetanus toxoid, Anaphylactoid reaction.

With the increase in traffic, road-side injuries are more and more common and so the immunisation with tetanus toxoid. As against the incidence of hypersensitivity to anti-tetanus serum, the toxoid is thought to be quite safe. We report here a case of hypersensitivity to tetanus toxoid.

Case Report

A 12-year-old male child had multiple abrasions and a deep wound on his right lower limb. His wounds were cleaned and an antiseptic dressing was done. In view of a strong family history of allergy, it was considered to give first a test dose of 0.1 ml of 1:10 dilution of the tetanus toxoid intradermally before giving the full dose. Within a few minutes, the patient developed local pain and itching which increased to generalised urticaria. The child had giddiness, his pulse became very fast and thready and he developed severe bronchospasm. Immediately the child was given 0.3 ml adrenaline subcutaneously along with 25 mg chlorpheniramine and hydrocortisone intravenously. The

patient recovered without any recurrence of symptoms.

Comments

Hypersensitivity reactions in the form of a local reaction or a generalised anaphylactoid reaction, though known with tetanus toxoid, are extremely rare.¹ Adsorbed toxoid has been observed to produce reactions more frequently than the plain one. The skin test is usually positive in almost all the reactors. Occasionally, it is positive even in the non-reactors.¹ Both types of reactions, immediate and delayed have been recorded.

For the prevention of untoward reactions, it is important to avoid unnecessary doses. It is better to avoid giving a booster before 5 years. An initial smaller dose of 0.1 ml followed after 12 hours by the rest of the dose can help to prevent severe reactions.²

References

1. Brindle MJ and Twyman DG : Allergic reactions to tetanus toxoid, *Brit Med J* 1962; 1 : 1116.
2. Edsall G, Elliott MW, Peebles TC et al : Excessive use of tetanus toxoid boosters, *J Amer Med Assoc*, 1967; 202 : 17.

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