

Immunologic dysfunction and Hodgkin Lymphoma: two sides of a coin?

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Introduction

The relationship between Hodgkin Lymphoma (HL) and autoimmunity or autoimmune rheumatic manifestations has been rarely reported in the literature. In particular in the adulthood a two-way process has been hypothesized to explain this association.

Methods

We report 4 patients affected by HL in which the diagnosis of HL has been preceded by symptoms mimicking rheumatologic or autoimmune diseases.

Results

The 4 patients 3 males and 1 female, aged respectively 9 (1 pt), 12 (1 pt), and 16 (2 pts) years were diagnosed as recurrent pericarditis (1 pt), autoimmune hemolytic anemia (1 pt), bilateral uveitis with chronic recurrent multifocal osteomyelitis (1 pt) and arthritis. In the 4 patients immunosuppressive treatment was performed, based on corticosteroids, associated to azathioprine and metotrexate in 2 patients, with poor clinical advantage.

Subsequently, from 5 to 12 months later, a diagnosis of HL in advanced stage (stage IIIB 1 pt, stage IVA 1 pt, stage IVB 2 pts) could be made.

In these 4 patients the early onset of rheumatologic/autoimmune diseases has probably caused a delay in the diagnosis of HL, leading to advanced stage disease in all patients.

Conclusion

The better comprehension of the relationship between immune dysregulation and lymphoproliferative diseases may offer insights to the management of HL.

In the diagnostic work-up and follow up of autoimmune/rheumatologic disorders a high index of suspicion should be kept to early recognize the onset of malignant lymphoproliferative diseases.

Affix

References

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