Primary lesion of Mucocutaneous Leishmaniasis simulating external otitis

Márcia dos Santos da Silva¹, Renato Telles de Sousa², Euclides Batista da Silva³, Jorge Augusto de Oliveira Guerra⁴, Nathália Matos Gomes⁵, Renata Farias de Santana⁶, Rebecca Souza Mubarak⁷

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INTRODUCTION

Mucocutaneous Leishmaniasis (MCL) has different clinical forms, depending on the leishmania species involved and its relation with the host¹. In this paper, we report on the case of a patient, in whom the primary lesion was on the ear pinna, with bacterial infection associated.

CASE PRESENTATION

A 53-year-old male patient, coming from an endemic rural area, was referred to the ENT Department with a painful suppurative lesion in his left ear pinna, with necrotic areas in the helix and anti-helix, granulomatous aspect in the pre and retroauricular regions and an elevated papule with central necrosis, similar to an inoculation lesion (Figure 1A-B). The patient reported the signs and symptoms started about one month before, with intense pruritus, followed by papulae and ulceration in two weeks. Otoscopy was normal. Blood workup showed a leucocytosis of 14,498 cells/mm³ and ESR of 54 mm. Other laboratory parameters were normal. Mastoid and ear CT scans were also normal.

We surgically removed debris from the area, collected material for culture and biopsy, and started the patient on clindamycin. The secretion culture isolated Staphylococcus aureus, and we decided to keep the antibiotic course. After 14 days, the suppurative process regressed, making the granulomatous aspect clearer in the bottom of the ulcer, infiltrating the adjacent skin (Figure 1C).

Histopathology reported an intense inflammatory infiltrate, made up of lymphocytes, plasmocytes, cosinophilic granulocytes and cellular debris on the dermis. The findings were suggestive of MCL. However, no parasite was seen. We then roughed up the borders of the lesion for a direct exam, and then we found the leishmania in the amastigote form.

The patient was then started on Amoxicillin (15mg/kg/day) for 30 days. After 20 days of treatment, the granulomatous process regressed and the amastigote (15mg/kg/day) for 30 days. After 20 days of treatment, the granulomatous process regressed and the amastigote form was completely reepithelialised (Figure 1E-F).

The classic MCL is a well-outlined ulcer, with elevated borders and granulomatous bottom, which sprouts out at the place of inoculation². The secondary infection may happen in 54.2% of the patients, and the most commonly found germ is the Staphylococcus aureus³, the same found in our case, which explains the good initial response after starting the clindamycin.

Clinical suspicion was based on associating lesion appearance with epidemiological data⁴. The characteristic aspect of the leishmaniasis ulcer, which sprouts out at the place of inoculation², the same found in our case, which explains the good initial response after starting the clindamycin.

Histopathology suggested MCL, and we extended it for 30 more days. After 60 days of treatment, the culture confirmed Leishmania species and its relation with the host. Amoxicillin and Fluconazole were added to the treatment, when the granulomatous bottom became more evident, and the diagnosis of MCL was hereby presented, histopathology suggested MCL, and the parasites were found by direct exam, thus defining the diagnosis.

The drug-of-choice to treat all types of leishmaniasis are pentavalent antimonials. In Brazil, the Department of Health recommends the dose of 15 mg/kg/day, for 20 days for the skin lesions⁵, which is what we used in the patient hereby reported, and we extended it for 30 more days because of the severity of the lesion. When there is no response to treatment, the drugs of choice are the pentamidines and amphotericin B. Alternative treatments, such as azithromycin, paromomycin, miltefosine, pentoxidylamine, alluporinol, fluconazole e itraconazole are still not proven in large scale⁶,⁷.

FINAL REMARKS

MCL lesions have an intense polymorphism. The patient’s epidemiological past and a high degree of suspicion are fundamental for proper diagnosis.

REFERENCES


¹ MD. 1st year ENT Resident.
² MSc in Otorhinolaryngology; Head of the Otorhinolaryngology Department - Getúlio Vargas University Hospital.
³ MSc in Infectology; Infectologist of the Amazon Tropical Medicine Foundation. Head of the Hospital Infection Control Committee - Getúlio Vargas University Hospital.
⁴ PhD in Infectology; Infectologist of the Amazon Tropical Medicine Foundation.
⁵ MD. 2nd year Dermatology Resident.
⁶ MD. 3rd year ENT Resident.
⁷ MD. 1st year General Practice Resident.