



INFECTIOUS DISEASES (BACTERIAL, FUNGAL, VIRAL, PARASITIC, INFESTATIONS)

PAIN RELATED TO VARICELLA ZOSTER VIRUS REACTIVATION: COMPARISON BETWEEN TYPICAL HERPES ZOSTER AND ZOSTER SINE HERPETE

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Introduction: Herpes Zoster (HZ) is typically characterized by pain involving the area of vesicular eruption. Several patients, however, complain of unilateral radicular pain without rash (zoster sine herpette (ZSH)).

Objective: Aim of the study was to evaluate whether the severity and duration of pain and the use of analgesics are greater in ZSH patients, than in typical HZ with rash.

Materials and Methods: 16 consecutive patients with acute unilateral pain, without vesicular eruption (ZSH), were compared to 16 controls suffering from typical HZ eruption. We selected only patients with laboratory evidence of VZV reactivation. Serum samples were obtained from all patients at their initial visit and one and two months later. The administered therapies and the average pain score (VAS score) were recorded monthly.

Results: VZV DNA persisted statistically higher in ZSH sera than HZ sera one month after onset ($p=0.0007$). ZSH patients averaged greater pain than HZ patients, scoring VAS 76.88 and 66.88 ($p=0.0012$) respectively. ZSH patients used significantly more opioid therapy than HZ patients ($p=0.0449$; OR 9.00).

Conclusions: This is the first study that compares pain in ZSH and HZ patients: we detected greater severity and duration of pain and more opioid use in patients with ZSH.

