



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

THE LUCIO'S PHENOMENON IN PREGNANCY, A DIAGNOSTIC CHALLENGE

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Background: The Lucio's phenomenon is an unusual variant of lepromatous reaction type 2 characterized by severe necrotic geometric-shaped cutaneous lesions. Precipitating factors include infections, drugs, vaccines and pregnancy. Few descriptions of pregnancy and Lucio's phenomenon had been reported in the worldwide literature.

Observation: A 33 year old female patient 24 weeks pregnant was admitted for constitutional symptoms and painful purpuric and necrotic sharply delineated ulcers. Ulcers initially were localized in legs and have progressively been extended to buttocks, arms, ears and nasal septum.

Histopathologic findings of a skin biopsy revealed vasculitis and thrombotic vasculopathy of small and medium sized arteries. Direct immunofluorescence showed granular deposition of C3. Laboratory exams showed anemia and all the rest of the biological exam was normal.

Two months after her admission, she developed erythematous and tender nodules in her extremities with positive inguinal adenopathies. A new biopsy was performed and it was consistent with lepromatous leprosy with recurrent type 2 reaction. Bacilloscopy of the lymph at various sites revealed acid-fast bacilli with the formation of globi.

Our patient was treated with a multidrug therapy scheme including rifampicin, clofazimine and dapsone. The gestation developed at week 35 and the newborn was of appropriate weight for gestational age.

Key message: Pregnancy is associated with a high incidence of first diagnosis of leprosy or exacerbation of the disease in patients with an established diagnosis. However, it is important to know that leprosy doesn't harm the course of pregnancy, but pregnancy can be lethal in a leprosy patient. Lucio's phenomenon manifestations are not easily recognized or might mimic other diseases such as septic vasculitis, cryoglobulinemia, cocaine abuse or any other autoimmune disease but it is important reaching an early diagnosis and instituting prompt treatment, thereby reducing morbidity and mortality.

