



VASCULAR DISEASE, VASCULITIS

AN UNUSUAL PRESENTATION OF GIANT CELL ARTERITIS

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Background: Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) is an uncommon primary vasculitis that mainly affects branches of the external carotid. It's predominate in women and older adults and its cause is unknown, however a genetic-immunological origin is proposed. Clinically it is characterized by fever, headache, asthenia, anorexia, weight loss and absence of pulse at the superficial temporal arteries; in severe cases, blindness and mandibular claudication. The biopsy establishes the diagnosis, but the Doppler ultrasound and Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate (ESR) are useful at the clinical approach. There is no specific treatment, being useful corticosteroids; prognosis is related to vascular complications.

Observation: We show the case of a 65-year-old woman with a medical past history of Diabetes Mellitus, who presented with a three-month evolution dermatosis that involved the skin on her scalp and face characterized by erythematous plaques with an infiltrated appearance and fluctuating consistency, ulcers covered with eschar, as well as important diffuse alopecia. She began her condition four months ago with intermittent frontal headache, fever, asthenia and weight loss, referring to an isolated episode of amaurosis. The Echo-Doppler reported wall thickening of both temporal arteries and "halo" sign. The biopsies showed extensive necrosis to adipose tissue and deep granulomatous infiltrate; laboratory data with normocytic normochromic anemia and high ESR. High doses of Methylprednisolone started showing adequate response.

Key Message: GCA is the most frequent primary vasculitis in older adults. Different skin and mucosal manifestations have been reported, but cutaneous ulcers and necrosis of the scalp is present in less than 1% of cases, it is not directly associated with anagen effluvium in our patient. The diagnosis requires a high clinical suspicion; accordingly the role of dermatologists is fundamental for early and multidisciplinary management.

