Case report

Bloody diarrhea: A rare chief complain of leptospirosis

Narges Najafi¹, Iman Sadeghian², Fatemeh Ahangarkani¹, Roya Sheikholeslami¹, Lotfollah Davoodi*¹

1- Antimicrobial Resistance Research Center, Department of Infectious Diseases, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran
2- Student Research Committee, Faculty of Medicine, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran

Corresponding author: Lotfollah Davoodi Email: lotfdavoodi@yahoo.com

Abstract

Objective: Leptospirosis is one of the most common zoonosis diseases that presents by involvement of different systems. This infectious disease ranges from mild to very severe but bloody diarrhea is not a known clinical primary manifestation of the illness.

Case Presentation: We describe a patient with leptospirosis who was admitted because of bloody diarrhea in the beginning. The patient admitted as a probable shigellosis case. Diagnosis of leptospirosis was confirmed based on result of Leptospira microscopic agglutination test (MAT). After 7 days treatment he made a complete recovery and was discharged.

Conclusion: Although leptospirosis with presentation of bloody diarrhea is an unusual report. Leptospirosis should be considered in all febrile patients particularly in farmers endemic area.

Keywords: Leptospirosis, Diarrhea, MAT, Zoonosis.

Introduction

Leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease in humans and animals caused by Leptospira species of the spirochete family (1). It has recently been reported as an emerging infectious disease around the world, including the Pacific region (2). This infectious disease is characterized with a wide spectrum of clinical presentation varying from a slight symptom to fulminant fatal disease (3-4). In the mild cases it can present flu like illness with fever, myalgia and headache. Severe form described by jaundice, renal failure, liver dysfunction and hemorrhagic diathesis is known Weil’s syndrome. The primary event caused by leptospira is injury to the endothelium of small blood vessels result in ischemic damage to kidneys, liver, meninges and muscles (5). A low suspicion of this disease coupled with the variation and non-specificity of the clinical manifestation lead to significant number of patients that go unrecognized. Leptospirosis is a prominent under diagnosed disease in our country due to lack of enough awareness, different manifestations and inadequate diagnostic facilities in many areas. Early diagnosis and proper management can prevent fatal outcome (6-9).

Case presentation

A 26-year-old man was admitted to the infectious diseases ward of RAZI Hospital pertaining to Mazandaran University of medical sciences, in August 2014 with complaint of bloody diarrhea beginning from the day before admission day and was 8-10 times a day. Characteristics of diarrhea were bloody, Voluminous and low consistency, high frequent with tenesmus. The patient had vomiting night before that was not bloody. Fever initiated from the same night. Other symptoms of patient were malaise, true vertigo, and nausea, abdominal pain at hypogastric region and headache that started from the day of admissiona. he had sub-conjunctival hemorrhage, no photophobia, and no cervical lymphadenopathy. Based on history he was a farmer and was working in rice farm. No other family members showed similar symptoms in the recent days. After obtain of stool exam, Treatment with third-generation cephalosporin (ceftiaxone 1gram twice a day IV) was started empirically for probable shigellosis. Also normal saline serum, antipyretic prescribed and Primary laboratory tests were pled that results were in order below: total leukocyte count 6500/mm3,
hemoglobin 14.2, platelet count 105000, blood urea
51mg/dl and creatinine 1.3 mg/dl, blood sugar
101, sodium 134 mg/dl, potassium 4.1 mg/dl,
erthrocyte sedimentation rate 9 in 1 st hr, CRP
weekly positive, total serum bilirubin 3.8mg/dl,
unconjugated serum bilirubin 1.4mg/dl, FBS 107,
SGOT 62, SGPT 51, phosphorus 2.6, stool exam
was done and it showed 15-20 WBC and many
RBC and no evidence of ova, parasites and stool
culture was negative after two days. 2 days later in
CBC his leukocyte count was 4300, haemoglobin
12.2 and platelet count 71000, blood culture
negative. In Stool culture he had no pathogen.
After 3 days WBC in stool exam decreased to 2-3
and RBC was 10-15. After 3 days, patient’s general
condition was improved and gross bloody diarrhea
was discontinued. Further investigation was conducted.
It indicated negative serum viral markers for infectious diseases like dengue and viral hepatitis. Although the initial signs and symptoms were not usual in leptospirosis, because of epidemiological data and thrombocytopenia, abnormal LFT, we thought about leptospirosis seriously. Therefore we sent microscopic agglutination test (MAT) which was positive for Seroghe hardjo Serovar of leptospirosis on titer 1:800.
Antibiotics were continued for 7 days until patient
made a complete recovery of symptoms and plt
count and then he discharged.

Discussion
Leptospirosis is a re-emerging zoonotic disease that
was first depicted in the early 18th century. Many
patients are observed in Iran particularly in the
north area (7-8). It is more common in tropical
regions. Wild or domestic animals, including rats,
mice, sheep, cattle, pigs, dogs, raccoons, and goats,
are the reservoir of leptospirosis (10-11-12).
Infected animals, even vaccinates ones, excrete
leptospiira in the urine. It can persist for several
months in the environment with appropriate
temperature (28 to 32°C), moisture (13-14-15).
Direct contact with the urine of infected animals or
exposure to soil, water, or other matter contaminated with leptospiira make humans infected (15-16).
People with occupational risk include farmers, ranchers, loggers, trappers, veterinarians, rice-field laborers, and sewer
workers. Entertainments such as swimming,
canoing and hunting may also involve contact
with the pathogen (15). Headache, myalgia, nausea,
and vomiting are the most common complaints;
however, neurologic, respiratory, cardiac, ocular,
and gastrointestinal manifestations can occur (12-13).
Gastrointestinal involvement in leptospirosis
with haemorhage has been reported rarely, particularly in the severe form of disease (17-21).

Electron microscopic studies show capillary system
injury: endothelium swell and detach from the
basement membrane leaving areas of exposed
interstitium, even in areas free of hemorrhage. This
event may justify the bleeding from vessels even in
gastrointestinal system (15-16). Leptospirosis is
however likely to be underobserved due to the lack
of awareness of the disease, non-specific clinical
manifestation, and delayed diagnostic test. In the
differential diagnosis of in any acute febrile
condition, Leptospirosis should be noted. Certain
diagnosis is based on demonstration of the
microorganism from different specimens such as
blood (first seven days), cerebrospinal fluid (day
four to ten) and urine (after tenth day) by dark field
microscopy (8-15-17-18). Serologic tests like
microscopic agglutination test (MAT), indirect
hemagglutination test, dipstick ELISA and dot
ELISA for lgM antibodies in combination with
clinical signs and symptoms are compatible with
establishment of diagnosis (8-10).

Conclusions
Leptospirosis with presentation of bloody diarrhea
is an unusual report. A high index of suspicion is
indispensable to ensure prompt diagnosis. Patients’
general condition can worse rapidly if treatment is
delayed. Leptospirosis should be considered in all
febrile patients particularly with a history of
exposure to freshwater, walking barefoot and
working in rice farm, inhabitant of endemic area or
travel to such places, recent flood and etc.

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