

Amebic pericarditis: a summary of Thai cases

Amip perikarditleri: Tayland vakalarının özeti

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Amebiasis is an important protozoa infection with its high prevalence in the tropical disease. The common clinical manifestation of amebiasis is the bloody diarrhea. For its complication, liver abscess is common. However, there are also other rare but fatal complications of amebiasis. The amebic pericarditis is an example of rare complication of amebic infection. In Thailand, amebiasis is an important protozoan infection. There have been sporadic cases of amebic infections in Thailand every year. Here, the author performed a literature review of the reports of amebic pericarditis in Thailand in order to summarize the characteristics of this infection among Thai patients.

This study was designed as a descriptive retrospective study. A literature review of the papers concerning amebiasis infection in Thailand was performed, using the database of published works cited in the Index Medicus and Science Citation Index. The author also reviewed the published works in all 256 local Thai journals, which are not included in the international citation index. The literature review focused on the years 1935-2003. According to the literature review, only the reports involving amebic pericarditis were recruited for further study. The details of clinical presentations of the patients (such as clinical manifestation, diagnosis, treatment, and discharge status) in all included reports were studied. Descriptive statistics, including range and percentage, were used in analyzing the patient characteristics and laboratory parameters for each group. All the statistical analyses in this study were made using SPSS 7.0 for Windows.

According to this study, there have been only 3 reports (1-3) in the literature of 3 cases of amebic pericarditis infection in the

Thai population, of which 1 case was lethal. All cases were adult males. All cases had previous amebic liver abscesses. The common symptoms in all cases were sudden chest pain, discomfort and arrhythmia. For the survival cases, the diagnosis and primary treatment was by pericardial tapping.

Amebic pericarditis is a very rare complication of amebic infection. This infection is usually a secondary complication due to a primary amebic complication, liver abscess. Pathophysiologically, pyogenic liver abscesses with hepato-pericardial fistula, leading to acute cardiac tamponade. Hepatic and pulmonary amebiasis is not uncommon in Thailand. However, perforation of liver abscess into pericardial sac is quite rare. Few cases have been reported in literature. This complication is found to be a serious one. Patient usually died before diagnosis was made. If the case is known while alive, this complication could be treated and the patient may survive. To keep it in mind, more diagnosis could be made. Of interest, there is no case of amebic pericarditis in Thailand for more than 25 years. This might be due to the fact that amebic liver abscess is successfully detected and treated (4) before it generate new secondary complication.

References

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