A case of paediatric GH-secreting pituitary adenoma apoplexy

C. Partenope¹, D. Gallo¹, S. Recupero¹, C. Baldoli², P. Mortini³, M. Losa³, G. Weber¹, G. Barera¹, G. Pozzobon¹

¹Pediatric Department, San Raffaele Hospital, Milan, Italy
²Neuroradiology Department, San Raffaele Hospital, Milan, Italy
³Neurosurgery Department, San Raffaele Hospital, Milan, Italy

Background

Paediatric pituitary adenomas comprise rare but challenging pathologies in children and adolescents related to their endocrine and neurological features. Pituitary apoplexy is a clinical syndrome caused by hemorrhage or infarction of the pituitary gland and is predominantly seen in patients with pituitary adenomas.

Methods

A 11-year-old girl presented with fever and sudden headache with vomiting. She abruptly developed bilateral hemianopia. On suspicion of infectious meningitis, lumbar puncture and brain MRI were performed on admission.

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• The physical exam was normal, without neurological abnormalities except for visual disturbances.
• Auxological parameters were >95th percentile (height 2.25 SDS, weight 1.85 SDS).
• Biochemistry laboratory and cerebrospinal fluid analysis were normal.
• Brain MRI showed a 33 mm-sellar and suprasellar mass with pituitary stalk and optic chiasm dislocation and third ventricle compression; it has heterogeneous signal features and contrast enhancement, highly suggestive of hemorrhagic transformation of a pre-existing pituitary adenoma.
• The endocrine investigations demonstrated central hypothyroidism, hypocortisolism, Growth Hormone (GH) deficiency and diabetes insipidus.

Conclusions

➢ Pituitary apoplexy in children and adolescents is a rare entity that requires rapid and adequate treatment to prevent a life-threatening situation.
➢ Pituitary failure may develop with the effect of adenoma itself or following surgical excision.
➢ Clinical and laboratory signals may be suggestive and MRI neuroimaging is fundamental for diagnosis.

References