ATYPICAL PRESENTATION OF ACUTE SUPPURATIVE THYROIDITIS IN A 6 YEAR OLD CHILD

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INTRODUCTION

- Bacterial infection of the thyroid (acute suppurative thyroiditis, AST) is a very rare condition, particularly in children, as the thyroid gland is extremely resistant to infection.
- Typical presentation with painful anterior neck mass, fever, sore throat, dysphagia, leucocytosis, elevated inflammation parameters.

CASE REPORT

- 6 year old girl with acute painless neck enlargement, without further symptoms.
- On palpation hard neck mass, without erythema, CRP and ESR only slightly elevated.
- Normal Thyroid hormone levels.
- Calcitonin elevated.
- Progressive neck swelling within a week with erythema and tenderness, without fever or pain, ESR elevation to maximum 49 mm/hr.
- Fine needle aspiration biopsy:
  - Cytology negative for malignancy.
  - Positive culture for *Prevotella oris*.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

- Acute suppurative thyroiditis may sometimes present with atypical findings without pain, without systemic reactions and with only mild laboratory changes.
- Patients with AST remain mostly euthyroid.
- Serum calcitonin levels can be elevated in infectious thyroiditis and are not associated with malignancy.
- Ultrasound findings show heterogeneous echogenicity of the thyroid gland (in our patient hyperechogenic changes) with irregular margin and inflammation.
- AST can be successfully treated with appropriate antibiotics.
- In recurrent infections anatomical defects such as pyriform fistula should be considered, in our patient because of full retrieval we decided for a “wait and see” strategy.

Blood test at diagnosis | Value | Normal range
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Leukocytes | 8.2/nl | 5-12/nl
CRP | 7.8 mg/l | 0-2 mg/l
Calcitonin | 14.2 µg/l | <9.8 µg/l
TSH | 4.19 mIU/l | 0.60-4.84 mIU/l
ESR | 23 mm/h | <20 mm/h

REFERENCES


CONTACT INFORMATION

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