Adverse Reaction during Methylprednisolone Pulse

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Dear Sir,

Methylprednisolone pulse toxicity has been rarely reported [1, 2] and always occurred during the first administrations. On the other hand, acute vincristine neurotoxicity has been frequently reported [3-9]. We observed adverse reactions during a methylprednisolone pulse included in an intermittent chemotherapy program.

For several years a 53-year-old man with multiple myeloma and renal failure (serum creatinine 1.5-2.5 mg/dl) has been treated every 3 weeks in our unit. He received vincristine (1 mg infused over 2 min), methylprednisolone (1 g infused in saline solution over 20 min), cyclophosphamide (600 mg infused over 2 min) and prednisone (100 mg/day) over the next 4 days.

Three years later, during cyclophosphamide infusion, after vincristine and methylprednisolone administration, the patient complained of pruritus, vision disturbance and restlessness; these symptoms reversed within 2 h. During the following three courses the treatment was unchanged, but methylprednisolone infusion was slackened (30-40 min); symptoms diminished and the patient complained only of pruritus and vision disturbance, starting during methylprednisolone and persisting during cyclophosphamide infusion.

Two months later, after vincristine administration and during methylprednisolone infusion, pruritus, vision disturbances, jaw pain, legs and hands paraesthesia and restlessness appeared: infusion was stopped and the symptoms reversed within 2-3 h. Three weeks later the patient was given only a me-

thylprednisolone pulse and immediately the same symptoms appeared. A week later he received only cyclophosphamide, without side effects. After another week vincristine alone was infused and no symptoms appeared. Therefore, we concluded that methylprednisolone was responsible for the adverse symptoms experienced by the patient. He reported slight pruritus also while taking prednisone for the 4 days after infusion. We continued the treatment utilizing only vincristine and cyclophosphamide, and side effects were no longer observed.

We want to point out this possible late side effect of methylprednisolone pulse therapy, on account of its widespread use in several diseases.

References

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