

NEUROCYSTICERCOSIS AS A PRESENTING FEATURE OF PICA: A CASE REPORT***Masaraf Hussain**

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INTRODUCTION

Neurocysticercosis (NCC) is a zoonotic disease caused by the larval form of the cestode *Taenia solium*. It is the commonest parasitic infection of the Central nervous system. NCC has a worldwide distribution and is mainly endemic in pork eating countries.

NCC is the cause of focal seizure in 26 to 50% patients in India. Kashmir and Kerala have a low incidence of NCC.^[1]

Humans can get cysticercosis, including NCC, by consuming eggs of *T.solium* due to fecal contamination of water or uncooked food.

Pica is a pattern of eating non-nutritive substances (like dirt, paper, clay, sand, paint), lasting for at least 1 month. It is seen more in young children. Pica may be seen in nutritional deficiency disorders, like iron deficiency anemia, or some toxicities like lead toxicity. Infection may occur if contaminated soil is being consumed.

Here we present a case of Pica who developed Neurocysticercosis due to consumption of contaminated soil or clay.

CASE REPORT

A 16 years old girl presented with focal seizure without secondary generalization. She also had a history of eating non-nutrient substances like soil, clay, paper. As she was a pure vegetarian, there was no history of pork consumption.

Examination revealed no focal neurological deficit. There were no signs of increased intracranial pressure, and fundii were normal. There were no signs suggestive of anemia, jaundice. There were no subcutaneous nodules.

On neuroimaging lesions suggestive of neurocysticercosis was detected. Blood investigation was within normal limits, however serum ferritin was detected to be below normal limit.

She was started on Tablet Albendazole, together with anti-epileptic medication, and steroid. Seizures were controlled, and anti-helminthic and steroid was stopped

after 10 days. Oral iron supplementation was started on discharge.

DISCUSSION

Pica is known to occur in iron deficiency anemia. The ingestion of contaminated soil, clay, in this disorder may lead to parasitic infestation.

Neurocysticercosis should be suspected in a case of focal seizure, as it is the leading cause of focal seizure in India. However, the cause of its spread should always be ascertained, to prevent its recurrence.

In the above case the cause of neurocysticercosis was due to Pica, secondary to iron deficiency anemia, as evidenced by low serum ferritin.

Though Neurocysticercosis is a common disease in India, the associated underlying condition of Pica is rarely reported.^[2]

CONCLUSION

Hence it is important to address the underlying cause, over and above the treatment of the condition of NCC by anti-helminthic, and anti-epileptic medication.

REFERENCES

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