Reviewer’s report

Title: Osteitis in dens axis caused by Treponema pallidum

Version: 2 Date: 28 February 2013

Reviewer: Michel JANIER

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quite interesting clinical case documenting a very rare aspect of syphilitic osteitis but
1. There are many strange words as dens axis, praxis, fauces, Th2 etc (T2??)
2. The authors should detail bone histology (plasma-cells...???) and comment on the precise localization of the treponemas in the tissue
3. Treatment given to the patient (cefuroxime and ceftriaxone) is not recommended by international guidelines although probably efficient
4. Which diagnosis do the authors give to the periorbital infection?
5. The assertion that osteitis is a rare complication of PRIMARY and secondary syphilis (conclusion line 7) is not true, never in primary!
6. The authors cannot write the patient has early acquired syphilis because there is no other clinical lesions of secondary syphilis and the periorbital infection was not evidently syphilitic
7. We need to know details of the serologies, particularly in the few years before the osteitis. The patient was MSM and HIV pos and had undoubtedly had many syphilitic tests between 2002 and 2012. If there is a negative test (or increase of NTT titres) in the previous year, we shall be able to consider it as an early syphilis (and osteitis should be very probably secondary syphilis bone lesion); if not, syphilis is of unknown duration/late and in that case the diagnosis is less clear, we could even hypothesize that osteitis is not syphilitic, that treponemas have been trapped in inflammation bone tissue and that clinical improvement has been obtained by curing another infection with broad spectrum antibiotics
8. Do the authors have a more remote control of MRI?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
no conflict