Reviewer's report

Title: Constrictive pleuropericarditis: a dominant clinical manifestation in Whipple's disease

Version: 2 Date: 21 October 2013

Reviewer: Thomas Marth

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This is an interesting case report. The authors point out several pitfalls in the diagnosis of an atypical case of Whipple’s disease. Even modern and sophisticated diagnostic procedures (i.e., MR and PET) were not able to reveal the real cause of this inflammatory condition.

While unspecific cardiac symptoms may be found quite frequently in Whipple’s disease, endocarditis and pericarditis represent rare clinical manifestations.

Minor Essential Revisions:
On the other hand, with the use of PCR for the diagnosis of endocarditis, it has been demonstrated that Tropheryma whipplei is the fourth most frequent cause of culture-negative infectious endocarditis (Geissdorfer et al. 2012 J Clin Microbiol).

Minor Essential Revisions:
It should be mentioned more clearly in the discussion, 1) that endocarditis and pericarditis may occur as sole manifestation in Whipple’s disease, i.e. without gastrointestinal involvement; 2) that immunosuppressive treatment (as in this case) may lead to a deterioration of Whipple’s disease (and sometimes to the occurrence of diarrhea); and 3) that PCR for Tropheryma whipplei should be used early in unclear inflammatory disorders, including cases of polyserositis.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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