Reviewer’s report

Title: The first report of severe anemia associated with acute renal failure and adult minimal change disease: A case report

Version: 2 Date: 24 June 2008

Reviewer: Monique Cho

I am familiar with the literature and believe that this case meets one of the 9 criteria for evaluation in the journal: Unexpected or unusual presentations of a disease

Has the case been reported coherently?: Yes

Is the case report authentic?: Yes

Is this case worth reporting?: Yes

Is the case report persuasive?: No

Does the case report have explanatory value?: No

Does the case report have diagnostic value?: No

Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?: No

Is the anonymity of the patient protected?: Yes

Comments to authors:

Qian et al. have described a case of minimal change nephropathy (MCN) with concurrent severe acute renal failure and anemia. The degree to which the patient developed anemia was unusual and authors question if early administration of erythropoietin may have a beneficial role in renal recovery.

Significant reduction of hemoglobin requiring blood transfusion is rare in acute renal failure associated with MCN, and the question of therapeutic role of erythropoietin is worthy of discussion. The following are more specific comments:

1. The case presentation needs to have more details:
   a. History: What was the patient’s previous renal function, particularly given 10-year history of diabetes? Any microalbuminuria or proteinuria at baseline? How well was his hypertension controlled? What are his medications and has he been taking NSAIDs or other over-the-counter drugs, in the setting of recent total knee replacement? Are there any medications that could account for the development of MCN? Please provide more details on history of present illness –
any recent infection, immunizations, antibiotic use, etc.

b. Work-up: Please define what is meant by work-up for autoimmune diseases and renal obstruction. Please provide the laboratory findings ruling out hemolysis – was peripheral smear examined? Given the patient’s age, was there any work-up for secondary causes of MCN, such as malignancy, hepatitis B/C, HIV? The exam findings need to be more detailed in this regard.

c. Would include the hemoglobin nadir in the text, given that this is the critical part of the report.

2. Since the main aspect of this case report is the severe degree of anemia, as acute renal failure has been well described already in the setting of MCN, it may be appropriate to spend a greater portion of the Discussion section on reviewing the existing data regarding the potential therapeutic role of erythropoietin. The possible mechanisms underlying renoprotective effect of erythropoietin should be reviewed, even if it means shortening the rest of the Discussion section regarding general aspects of MCN.

3. Page 8, third line in second paragraph: the sentence starting with “There is a paucity of human data evaluating this issue, --- please correct “is” to “are”.

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.