Reviewer's report

Title: Persistent Tn-Polyagglutination syndrome during febrile neutropenia: a case report and review of the literature

Version: 1 Date: 9 February 2010

Reviewer: Umesh Yalavarthy

Which of the following best describes what type of case report this is?: Unexpected or unusual presentations of a disease

Has the case been reported coherently?: Yes

Is the case report authentic?: Yes

Is the case report ethical?: Yes

Is there any missing information that you think must be added before publication?: Yes

Is this case worth reporting?: Yes

Is the case report persuasive?: Yes

Does the case report have explanatory value?: Yes

Does the case report have diagnostic value?: Yes

Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?: Yes

Is the anonymity of the patient protected?: Yes

Comments to authors:

General comments:

Overall, it was an excellent case report. Well written. I would like to applaud the authors for considering this rare diagnosis and it made a significant difference in the patient’s life. However after reviewing the paper I had few questions and suggestions.

Case presentation:

1. Why were the stool studies done: Did the patient develop diarrhea after presentation?

2. I assume blood cultures and urine cultures were done and were negative. If so, please mention that in the case report.
3. You adequately mentioned hemolytic anemia work up. Might consider adding normal LDH and bilirubin values in the case report.

4. What is the duration of antibiotic treatment?

Discussion:

1. How common is this disorder? (It was mentioned that this was the first Tnp case report in many years, please mention how many case reports were described in literature so far). How often does it present with pancytopenia?

2. Is multilineage dysplasia on bone marrow biopsy common in this disorder?

3. If possible, please explain how using murine diluted monoclonal antibody reagents deny the opportunity to recognize polyagglutinable cells.

4. It was mentioned that this is the 1st time this disorder was diagnosed with febrile neutropenia. How common is neutropenia in this disorder? If it is common, is there any specific immunologic reason why those patients never developed febrile neutropenia in previous cases?

(A little more clarification would help. If the disorder is so rare that this was never looked into, you can ignore this question)

5. If these patients were to undergo surgery, is it safe to use platelet transfusion? Is there any literature in this regard?

Formatting:

1. “This has caused major distress on her life because of lack of diagnosis certainty and concerns regarding her future health and the one of her offspring, because she has been told by some physicians that she and her family may carry an increased risk for hematological malignancies.”

It might be better to split this sentence.

2. TnP is not directly linked to malignancy or increased risk of invasive infections, with many elderly Tn individuals in apparently good health having been reported, although the Tn antigen itself has been widely studied as a marker of tumor cells, as O-glycans are common constituents of membranes and secreted mucins and exposure of Tn and sialyl-Tn has been demonstrated in many carcinomas.

This is a very complex sentence. Please consider breaking the sentence. Also, remove the extra period after reference.

Few minor suggestions:

1. NSVD : Please expand

2. It might be ok to remove the sentence, “otherwise was unremarkable” after past medical history since you had such a detailed description of past medical history.

3. The ANC was 400, Hemoglobin level of 6.8g/dL, MCV 82fL, and a platelet count of 47 x103 /mm3.

Sentence might be better if “The ANC was 400, Hemoglobin level was 6.8g/dL,
MCV 82fL, and platelet count was 47 x103 /mm3."

4. Please consider using all SI or metric units. (Serum iron and ferritin were in 2 different units).

5. Page 6; paragraph 3: last sentence. “This results in exposure of GalNAc alinked
to serine or threonine on polypeptide backbones.8”

Please remove extra a before linked.
Please mention GalNAc in brackets after N-acetyl galactosamine on page 5, paragraph2 so that abbreviation can be used here.
Please use the period after reference(not before) as you have done throughout the case report.

6. Page 7; paragraph 1: 2nd sentence. “There are some other inherited types whose frequency has not been established (Cad[Sda]-HEMPAS-NOR-Hyde Park-Tr).9-11:”

Please remove extra: and add period after reference.

7. Please follow the JMCR references guidelines

Revisions necessary for publication
I have no hesitation in recommending publishing this article after the above minor changes. Good luck.

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'