Author’s response to reviews

Title: Celiac Disease associated with aplastic anemia in a 6 year old female: a case report and review of literature.

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Author’s response to reviews:

Reviewer 1 has not raised any concerns or comments regarding revisions.

Reviewer 2: I have major problems with the abstract itself which prevent me from reviewing the case report in totality. These errors need to be rectified before a review can be completed.

There is a suggestion that the autoimmune process underlying both coeliac disease and autoimmune haemolytic anaemia is identical. This needs to be elaborated further. If the authors intention is to merely state that there exists a similarity in the etiopathogenesis of any autoimmune condition, this seems to point towards a well known fact. If the intent is to postulate a new position, then it needs to be elaborated upon. The case details seem incomplete and hastily worded. Relevant clinical details have been omitted. The mere coexistence of aplastic anaemia and coeliac disease does not necessarily imply a causal association. The final sentence in the conclusion is without any scientific basis whatsoever.

Author Response: With regard to the reviewers question about the relationship between celiac disease and aplastic anemia, we have mentioned in the discussion and elaborated further that we believe there to exist a potential association between the two diseases that is indeed based on the underlying similar pathogenesis. Considering that this is only the fourth pediatric case report regarding the celiac disease and aplastic anemia association, we do believe that further exploration of this relationship is warranted and agree that the coexistence of two diseases does not mean they are causally related. However, since both are T cell mediated diseases and have had cases reported in adults and children, any potential association would have an important impact on importance of timely intervention of either diseases and affect the prognosis of the patient.

We have added the following as the last line of the abstract conclusion:
We can see that all 4 pediatric cases reported with this potential association are from South East Asia and hence larger studies would be prudent to explore this association.

Similarly more evidence linking the pathogenesis of the diseases is mentioned in the Background:

'Both diseases share an underlying immune mechanism as the HLA DQ2 allele is identified in 90–95% of celiac individuals, and HLA DQ8 in the rest.'

The concern regarding case details being hastily worded has been taken seriously and the case has been reviewed by all authors involved, However no more details were available to be added since any relevant examinations performed, tests performed and treatment administered to the patient have already been mentioned in the report.

An addition regarding need for further studies has been made to the Conclusion and a list of countries where previous similar case reports occurred has been added to Table 2 in the manuscript to support the claim that all pediatric cases are from a certain area:

'All 4 pediatric cases regarding the CD-AA association have been reported from the previously known Indian Subcontinent as evident from Table 2 above. However it is not possible to make a final statement linking the two on the data we have till now. This is why we believe there need to be larger studies to further explore this potential association.'