Unusual Presentation of Galactosemia in a Child: Musculoskeletal Manifestations

Faiq I. Gorial, Maab Jasim Mohammed

Mediterr J Rheumatol 2019;30(2):123-4
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Faiq I. Gorial¹, Maab Jasim Mohammed²

¹Rheumatology Unit, Department of Medicine, College of Medicine, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq ²Rheumatology Unit, Baghdad Teaching Hospital, Baghdad, Iraq

ABSTRACT

Galactosemia is an autosomal recessive inherited disease of galactose metabolism. In this report, a galactosemia case with unusual presentation has been presented. We reported a child boy with galactosemia presented with arthralgia, hands deformity and decreased bone mineral density.

Mediterr J Rheumatol 2019;30(2):123-4
https://doi.org/10.31138/mjr.30.2.123
Article Submitted: 07/02/2019; Revised Form: 22/03/2019; Article Accepted: 30/03/2019

Keywords: Galactosemia, musculoskeletal manifestations, bone mineral density

INTRODUCTION

Galactosemia is an autosomal recessive inherited disease of the galactose metabolism due to galactose-1-phosphate uridyl transferase deficiency.¹ Classic galactosemia is characterized by vomiting, diarrhoea, anaemia, jaundice, failure to thrive, hypoglycaemia, hepatosplenomegaly, hepatocellular insufficiency, renal tubular dysfunction, cataracts, hypotonia and sepsis.²³ Long-term complications such as a decreased bone mineral density (BMD) might be the result of either dietary deficiencies secondary to the galactose-restricted diet or unknown intrinsic factors.⁴

CASE REPORT

A six-year-old boy was pre-diagnosed with galactosemia during infancy when he developed vomiting, poor feeding, jaundice, liver dysfunction and failure to thrive. Serum total bilirubin (8.7 mg/dl, reference range 0.3-1 mg/dl) was elevated. Plasma aspartate transaminase (89 U/L, reference range <20 U/L), alanine transaminase (94 U/L, reference range <20 U/L), and alkaline phosphatase (400 U/L, reference range 30-85 U/L) were significantly elevated. Liver biopsy was performed and revealed degeneration of hepatocyte with giant cell transformation and moderate cholestasis of both hepatocellular and canicular with bile thrombi associated with minimal necro-inflammatory changes of hepatocyte. Galactose-1-phosphate uridyl transferase (GALT) (1.7 U/g, reference range >3 U/g) was deficient. During infancy, he was managed by removing all galactose from the diet as soon as the diagnosis was suspected, immediately after starting the diagnostic investigations and without awaiting results, in order to prevent further life-threatening complications.

There was family history of galactosemia of third-degree relative (cousin). The young patient presented for examination because of joints pain and deformities. On examination, he was of short stature with poor dentition (Figure 1). Hands examination revealed dark skin pigmentation over the small joints of the hands, widening of the fingers most obvious in the ring and little fingers of both hands, and limitation of range of motion of the fingers (Figure 2). The dual x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) scan revealed osteopenia (Z score -2.2). The whole skeletal survey revealed decreased bone density with wide medulla as seen in bone marrow.

Corresponding author:
Faiq I. Gorial
Rheumatology Unit, Department of Medicine
College of Medicine, University of Baghdad
Medical City, Baghdad 00964, Iraq
E-mail: faiqig@gmail.com
CONCLUSION
Long-term complications occur in galactosemia. Strategies to improve bone formation should be considered to diminish morbidity in patients with this inborn error of metabolism. Follow up with DXA scan is necessary for assessment and detection of decreased bone mineral density.

REFERENCES