

Lupus erythematosus, thyroiditis, alopecia areata and vitiligo: A multiple autoimmune syndrome

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ABSTRACT

The combination of three autoimmune disorders or more in the same patient has defined as multiple autoimmune syndrome (MAS). As our knowledge, patients with autoimmune diseases have a tendency to develop additional autoimmune diseases. But the association of four autoimmune affections is rarely described. We report a case of a 32 year old woman with history of lupus, vitiligo and thyroiditis, presenting in our department with hair loss, which diagnosis of alopecia areata was made.

Key words: Lupus; Vitiligo; Alopecia areata; Thyroiditis; Autoimmune disease; Multiple autoimmune syndrome

INTRODUCTION

The association of three or more autoimmune diseases in a single patient has been defined as multiple autoimmune syndrome (MAS). However, the coexistence of three, four or even five autoimmune diseases is extremely rare (1). We report a case of this in a young patient.

OBSERVATION

A 32 year old woman, diagnosed with systemic lupus erythematosus 8 years earlier, put on topical corticosteroid, hydroxychloroquine and photo protection with good improvement, with vitiligo 6 years earlier, and an autoimmune thyroiditis 2 years earlier, which presented in our department for a hair loss of the scalp. The dermatological examination found diffuse non-scarring alopecia of the scalp; which dermoscopy objected a non-scarring alopecia, black dots (cadaverous hairs), yellow dots, tapering hairs (exclamation mark hairs), and broken hairs (Figs. 1a – 1f). Those lesions were diagnosis as alopecia areata. Moreover examination found limited

hypopigmented macules with islands of repigmentation on the face, forearm and backs of hands, related to her vitiligo (Figs. 2a – 2c) and hyperpigmented scars patch related to previous lupus lesions. In light of these findings, multiple autoimmune syndrome (MAS) type 3, including lupus erythematosus, autoimmune thyroiditis, pelade and Vitiligo, was obtained.

DISCUSSION

Multiple autoimmune syndrome is the coexistence of three or more autoimmune disorders. It is further classified into MAS type 1, 2 and 3 [1]. Dermatological autoimmune diseases, especially vitiligo, have a crucial place [2]. To explain that, endocrine or dermatological auto immunities are associated with auto antibodies that react to specific antigens, while patients with collagen diseases synthesize immunoglobulins that recognize non-specific cellular receptors, such as nucleoproteins and nucleic acids. Cellular autoimmunity is important in pathogenesis of multiple autoimmune syndrome. Abnormalities of T-cell-mediated immunity and humoral immunity have been overlappingly implicated [2,3]. Disorders

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Figure 1: (a-f) Diffuse non-scarring alopecia of the scalp; with dermoscopy objected a non-scarring alopecia, black dots (cadaverous hairs), yellow dots, tapering hairs (exclamation mark hairs), and broken hairs, related to alopecia areata.



Figure 2: (a-c) Limited hypopigmented macules with islands of repigmentation on the face, forearm and backs of hands, related to vitiligo.

of autoimmune pathogenesis are more common in patients with a history of another autoimmune disease. At least, one of them is usually a skin disease, such as psoriasis or scleroderma [4]. Moreover, the coexistence of three, four or even five autoimmune diseases is extremely rare. The existence of an autoimmune

disorder must contribute to discover other autoimmune diseases [5].

CONCLUSION

Although multiple autoimmune syndrome is rare, it should be considered if we have any autoimmune disease.

Consent

The examination of the patient was conducted according to the Declaration of Helsinki principles.

The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms. In the form the patient(s) has/have given his/her/their consent for his/her/their images and other clinical information to be reported in the journal. The patients understand that their names and initials will not be published and due efforts will be made to conceal their identity, but anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

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