Novel NPHS1 Gene Mutation in an Iranian Patient with Congenital Nephrotic Syndrome of the Finnish Type

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Dear Editor,

Congenital nephrotic syndrome of the Finnish type (CNF; OMIM*256300) is a rare autosomal recessive genetic kidney disease that develops in utero and is usually diagnosed before the age of 3 months of postnatal life. This disease is defined by massive proteinuria, consecutive hypoproteinemic edema and dyslipidemia from birth. Renal protein loss is furthermore accompanied by hypogammaglobulinemia predisposing these infants to bacterial infections such as peritonitis and respiratory infections, as well as thromboembolic complications that have repeatedly been observed. Kidney histology in this condition shows progressive mesangial sclerosis and capillary obliteration, and tubulointerstitial fibrosis. Many affected infants are prematurely, have low birth weight, and show poor statural growth and nutritional status.

The gene that is causative for this condition, NPHS1 (OMIM*602716), encodes a trans-membrane cellular adhesion molecule named nephrin which is a crucial component of the glomerular slit diaphragm to maintain the size-selective filtration barrier.

CNF is a progressive kidney disease and typically leads to end stage renal disease (ESRD) between 3 to 8 years of age. Renal transplants have a considerable risk of recurrence of the glomerular disease due to anti-nephrin antibodies observed in most of affected patients.

Herein, an Iranian boy with CNF is presented who carries a novel mutation in the NPHS1 gene.

A 45-day-old infant was admitted to the Children’s Medical Center Hospital, the Pediatrics Center of Excellence in Iran, with chief complaint of generalized edema. There was a family history of edema and proteinuria in his sibling who died in 2nd month of life without a clear diagnosis. Parents are first cousins consanguine.

At physical examination, the patient had a weight of 4,750g, a body length of 52cm, and his blood pressure was 80/60mmHg. Laboratory data showed blood urea nitrogen (BUN) of 7mg/dL, creatinine (Cr) of 0.39mg/dL, total protein of 5g/dL, and albumin of 2.36g/dL. Other laboratory tests revealed the following values: cholesterol: 152mg/dL, triglyceridemia: 7.5mg/dL, alkaline phosphatase: 2600IU/L, random protein/Cr: 525/44 mg/mg and 3+ protein in urinalysis. TORCH study was negative and immunologic investigations were normal. Therefore albumin infusions, levothyroxin, and enalapril (0.1mg/kg/d) and other supportive care were started for the patient.

He developed end-stage renal failure at the age of 6 years and received a renal allograft from an unrelated living donor. Four years later, he was hospitalized again with an abdominal mass. Burkitt’s lymphoma was diagnosed and he was put on chemotherapy. However, unfortunately, he died because of cancer progression 7 months later.

Genetic studies on DNA samples of the patient and his parents were performed to analyze the NPHS1 gene for suspected congenital nephrotic syndrome, Finnish type. Exons and flanking intronic regions of the gene (NPHS1 Exon 1-29, NM_004646) were amplified by PCR. PCR amplicons were purified and subjected to direct sequencing using an automated capillary sequencer. Sequences were compared to

Figure 1. Histopathological findings in renal biopsy.
A. Mesengial proliferation in immature (fetal type) glomeruli with crowded podocytes (Hematoxilin and eosin, 200X). B. Mesengial proliferation in glomeruli and proliferative changes in smooth muscle layer in the artery causing vascular medial hypertrophy (Hematoxilin and eosin, 200X).
Mutations in this gene cause an autosomal recessively inherited congenital nephrotic syndrome which was first diagnosed in Finland where its prevalence is particularly high due to a founder mutation effect. Detailed studies identified 2 main mutations in Finnish population, Fin major (L41fsX90) and Fin minor (R1109X), both leading to the absence of nephrin at the slit diaphragm structure. To date, many other NPHS1 mutations have been reported in Finnish and non-Finnish populations, including deletions, insertions, nonsense, missense, splice site and promoter mutations. We found a novel mutation in the presented case that also developed Burkitt’s lymphoma. Although it could be a rather chance association, it has not been reported in the literature. Further studies on nature of this gene and follow-up of further cases with such mutation are needed to confirm this association.

Typical findings on electron microscopy include effacement of the foot processes of podocytes, villous formation and complete absence of the slit diaphragm. Renal histopathology usually shows mixed glomerular and tubulointerstitial lesions that vary from mesangial hypercellularity to glomerular sclerosis and/or diffuse mesangial sclerosis and progress with age. Affected individuals almost always develop nephrosis soon after birth and may already show prenatal signs of hydropoenteniemia such as placental or skin edema. Fetal proteinuria leads to increase alpha-fetoprotein concentration in the amniotic fluid and a less important increase of it in maternal plasma, which has been used for prenatal testing especially in high-risk families. Affected infants are always resistant to steroids, immunosuppressive drugs and calcineurin inhibitors. These drugs may rather be harmful because of high susceptibility of these patients to infections. The disease is rapidly progressive and ESRD usually occur in the first decade of life.

Initial standard treatment for these patients is conservative, including daily or alternating albumin infusions, nutrition with a high-protein, low-salt diet, vitamin, thyroxine substitution and fluid restriction. Treatment of infections, especially in high-risk families.

Conflicts of interest
The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to the contents of this article.

Sr. Director:

Los síndromes paraneoplásicos (SP) asociados con el cáncer de próstata son entidades muy poco frecuentes y de características diversas, presentes en el contexto de una neoplasia avanzada. El síndrome de Stauffer (SS) ha sido descrito pocas veces en relación con este, y en su mayoría como presentación inicial de la neoplasia1.

Presentamos dos casos clínicos de pacientes con cáncer de próstata en hemodiálisis que desarrollaron SS.

CASO 1

Paciente varón de 70 años, hipertenso, con insuficiencia renal crónica (IRC) secundaria a nefroangioesclerosis en hemodiálisis durante tres años, diagnosticado de adenocarcinoma de próstata grado IV de Gleasson hnormonrefractario con metástasis óseas un año antes del inicio de terapia sustitutiva. Recibía tratamiento con goserelina y estramustina, con elevación persistente del antígeno prostático específico (PSA). Durante un ingreso por una bacteremia por S. agalactiae en relación con catéter presentó ictericia y prurito. En la analítica presentaba patrón colestásico: bilirrubina 29 mg/dl, fosfatasa alcalina 581 U/l, GGT 490 U/l, y serología viral negativa. En el mismo ingreso se encontraron lesiones hepáticas, diáfasis óseas y metástasis blásticas óseas múltiples, sin pleuresias ni adenopatías abdominales, no dilatación de vía biliar, no se apreciaban lesiones intrahepáticas, incluso el PSA, y serologías virales negativas. En la TAC no se apreciaban lesiones intrahepáticas, no dilatación de vía biliar, no adenopatías abdominales ni pelvícas, se observaron imágenes de metástasis blásticas óseas conocidas. Debido al deterioro general y progresivo del paciente, se decidió no realizar medidas más agresivas, siendo también éxito durante el mismo ingreso.

DISCUSIÓN

El SS es un SP muy raro, descrito en relación con neoplasias malignas (cáncer renal, linfoma, leucemia linfócita crónica, cáncer de tiroides, leiomiosarcoma, cáncer de próstata, droides fueron negativos. En la tomografía axial computarizada (TAC) no se encontraron lesiones hepáticas, dilatación de la vía biliar, ni adenopatías abdominales en hueso, lesiones compatibles con metástasis. El paciente mejoró del cuadro que motivó su ingreso, aunque mantuvo en todo momento datos de colestasis hepática, siendo dado de alta. Un mes después presentó hematoma subdural espontáneo con convulsiones secundarias, decidándose tratamiento conservador y siendo éxito.