THROMBOCYTOPENIA DURING ORAL BACLOFEN THERAPY

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Introduction : We present the case of a patient with a severe thrombocytopenic episode after initiation of oral baclofen therapy.

Case report : A 62 years old male patient was admitted in our rehabilitation centre after a 3 months hospitalization in an acute care hospital due to an Intracerebral hemorrhage in left basal ganglia and two episodes of aspiration pneumonia. His neurological deficits included right hemiparesis, Right Hemisensory loss, Nonfluent Aphasia and Apathy. Medications at time of admission included levetiracetam, sodium valproate, omeprazole, low-molecular-weight heparin (LMWH) and amlodipine. Hypertonia in the right upper and lower extremity was noted and evaluated using Modified Asworth Scale (2 for both the elbow and the quadriceps). Initially rehabilitation techniques such as range of motion exercises and stretching were used. However after two weeks of intervention, muscle hypertonia didn't show significant improvement. At the beginning of treatment, 2.5mg of baclofen 3 times per day was administered orally, while one week later was increased to 5 mg 3 times per day.

Results: a complete blood count showed a significant decrease in platelet count (163.000 to 105.000) during baclofen administration. No other medication was added or modified during this period. Further decrease in platelet count (105.000 to 63.000) was observed, therefore discontinuation of baclofen therapy was decided. 2 weeks later platelet count had increased to 140.000.

Conclusions: Thrombocytopenia was reported as a side effect in 0.7425% of patients receiving baclofen for treating spasticity. It is especially found in people who are male, 60+ old and have been taking the medication for < 1 month. Even though it is considered as a rare side-effect, platelet count should be regularly evaluated during baclofen therapy while medical history and co-administration of other drugs should be also taken into consideration.