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Albarran Ormond Syndrome: The First Unreported Historic Case in the Arab and the Early Documentation of the Syndrome Inn the Literature

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1. Abstract

Background: Albarran Ormond syndrome is a rare collagen vascular disease of poorly understood etiology. It is associated with a chronic non-specific inflammatory fibrosis of the retro-peritoneum, which can entrap and obstruct retroperitoneal structures especially the ureters. Awareness of the condition can be helpful for the practicing physicians because of its protean manifestations. The aim of this paper is to highlight the first historic case in the Arab which has not been reported and to describe the early documentation of the syndrome inn the literature.

Patients and methods: Arab Medias during the sixties reported with many inaccuracies that a famous Arab actor and singer "Mohammed Fawzy" from Egypt had a very rare mysterious disease. Therefore, the case in this paper will be based solely on the voice records of the patient himself.

Results: Albarran Ormond syndrome was characterized by early uretral obstruction requiring surgery followed by few years of progressive illness dominated by lower back pains and progressive loss of appetite that led to significant weight loss during the last weeks before his death.

Deep literature review showed that the significant role of Joaquín Albarrán who was the first to describe the condition in the medical literature was generally ignored.

Conclusion: History of medicine can provide us with a valuable lesson about disorders that can be totally missed and not reported. The first case Albarran Ormond syndrome in the Arab which occurred during the 1960s is highlighted in the scientific medical literature.

2. Introduction

Albarran Ormond syndrome is a rare disorder of retroperitoneal fibrosis characteristically associated with uretral obstruction presenting with oliguria or anuria, progressive pains in the back and lower abdomen, fatigue, anorexia and weight loss. It is commoner in males in middle and late forties. Retroperitoneal fibrosis is a fibro-inflammatory tissue that generally surrounds the abdominal aorta and the iliac arteries and extends into the retro-peritoneum to surround ureters.

The condition is generally idiopathic, but can occur secondary to drugs, malignancy, infections and surgery [1-17].

The aim of this paper is to highlight the first historic case in the Arab which has not been reported and to describe the early documentation of the syndrome inn the literature.

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3. Patients and Methods

The first unreported case of Albarran Ormond syndrome is studied and a deep literature review was made with aim of describing the early documentation. Many Arab Medias during the sixties reported with many inaccuracies that a famous Arab actor and singer "Mohammed Fawzy" from Egypt had a very rare mysterious disease and during his treatment in Germany, the treating doctor told him that only five patients had the disease before him. Several media sources during that time claimed that the treating German doctor named the disease after the patient "Fawzy's disease". Therefore, the case in this paper will be based solely in the voice records of the patient himself.

4. Results

Mohammed Fawzy was born on the 15th of August, 1918 and he was generally well during the 1950's. About three years before his death on the 20th of October, 1966, he had a surgery to relieve an uretral obstruction. During the several months before the surgery, he was not quite well and he was mainly experiencing fatigue. However, after the surgery he started experiencing gradually progressive lower back pain abdominal pains. He consulted physicians who performed tests and told him that he had some form of rheumatism and he needs analgesics only. The increasing severity of main made him travel to Germany and England for treatment. Figure 1 shows a sketch of Mohammed Fawzy in a hospital in London.

Figure 1: A sketch of Mohammed Fawzy in a hospital in London.

Mohammed Fawzy also mentioned that he went to the United States and stayed for about two months for treatment. Mohammed Fawzy confirmed that the doctors at the three countries he visited told him there is specific treatment for his condition and he needs to take analgesics to relief the pains. During the few months before his death he had marked anorexia that led to significant weight loss. Figure 2 shows Mohammed Fawzy few weeks before his death with obvious wasting and loss of hair.

Figure 2: Mohammed Fawzy few weeks before his death with obvious wasting and loss of hair.

Shortly before death, he said that his weight became 37kg.

5. Discussion

Albarran Ormond syndrome was first described by a urologist "Joaquín Albarrán" Figure 3.

Figure 3: Joaquin Maria Albarran y Dominguez (May 9, 1860 -

January 17, 1912).

He described it in his paper entitled "Renal retention by peri-ureteritis. External release of the ureter". The condition was also reported by Oberling 1925, Bachrach 1928, Putschar 1934 and Diekow 1942.

However, the American urologist John Kelso Ormond (Figure 4) was the first to report the disease in English Language in 1948.

Figure 4: John Kelso Ormond (1886-1978).

He reported two patients with diffuse fibrosis of the retroperitoneal tissues. The patients presented with sudden onset of anuria caused by external uretral compression by a dense grayish white connective tissue that was also surrounding the abdominal aorta and inferior vena cava. Ormond called their disorder "idiopathic retroperitoneal fibrosis" [2].

During the 1950's, there were at least 15 papers reporting the syndrome [3-17] and in 1962, Farrer and Peterson reported the occurrence of the condition in a child [18].

The available research evidence suggests that early treatment with corticosteroids may obviate the need for surgery in this condition and the clinical and radiographic improvement is often satisfactory after treatment.

6. Conclusion: History of medicine can provide us with valuable lessons about disorders that can be totally missed and not reported. The first case Albarran Ormond syndrome in the Arab which occurred during the 1960s is highlighted in the scientific medical literature.

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