Letters to the Editors

A misleading case of deficiency of adenosine deaminase 2 (DADA2): the magnifying glass of the scientific knowledge drives the tailored medicine in real life

Sirs,
A few years ago, we described the unusual association of cutaneous polyarteritis nodosa (c-PAN) and Common Variable Immunodeficiency (CVID) in a child (1). Recently, her diagnosis has been reviewed considering a new autoimmune inflammatory disease: the deficiency of adenosine deaminase 2 (DADA2), an enzyme mainly expressed by myeloid lineage and endothelium. Firstly described in two different concurrent studies in 2014 (2, 3), DADA2, due to a dysfunction of neutrophilic granulocytes, has been associated with an increased risk of autoimmune inflammatory disorders, including rheumatic diseases (4). Our patient was referred to our Unit at the age of 6 months later, because livedo reticularis, recurrent fever, rash, painful nodular lesions, arthralgia, myalgia and nodular lesions flared again, AZA was restarted, and remission subsequently obtained. In addition to the previous report, facing hypogammaglobulinaemia, leukopenia, and vasculopathy manifested as livedoid rash, recurrent stroke or polyarteritis nodosa depict the 125 cases currently reported (5, 6). Disease onset is widely different, ranging from early infancy to late adulthood, with a spectrum of clinical features broadly variable. In 2012 we described a Caucasian female followed at our Unit since she was 2 years old (1). Briefly, fever, rash, painful nodular lesions on feet, ankles and pretilial regions, and necrotising non-granulomatous vasculitis findings at skin biopsy were consistent with c-PAN diagnosis. She achieved disease remission on azathioprine (AZA, 3 mg/kg/day), but, after 8 months, hypogammaglobulinaemia (IgA 29.4 mg/dl, normal values for age ≤ 93 ± 27 mg/dl; IgM 28 mg/dl, normal values 56 ± 18 mg/dl; IgG 571 mg/dl, normal values 929 ± 228 mg/dl), with a poor humoral response to vaccination aimed to differentiate the child from other causes of immunosuppression from CVID onset, AZA was progressively stopped. Since hypogammaglobulinaemia persisted over months, CVID was diagnosed and intravenous immunoglobulins (400 mg/kg, monthly) introduced. Unfortunately, 6 months later, because livedo reticularis, vasculitic lesions on feet, arthralgia, myalgia and nodular lesions flared again, AZA was restarted, and remission subsequently obtained. In addition to the previous report, every attempt to AZA withdrawal resulted in a prompt relapse and due to the appearance of mild leukopenia and thrombocytopenia (3.480 cell/mm³ and 135.000/mm³), hydroxychloroquine was added (200 mg daily). Taking into account c-PAN features, hypogammaglobulinaemia, leukopenia and thrombocytopenia, DADA2 was then considered. DADA2 metabolites were measured in blood and urine with tandem mass resulting in the normal range (plasmatic adenosin 0.57 micromol/l, plasmatic 2-deoxiadenosine 0 micromol/l, urinary 2-deoxiadenosine 0.03 mmol/mol, urinary adenosin 0.44 mmol/mol), whilst homozygous CECR1 mutation Arg169Gln (c.506G→A; chromosome 22: 17,687,997C→T) was detected. Parents were heterozygous for mutation, as well as the unaffected sister and the maternal grandmother (Fig. 1). The diagnosis of DADA2 was confirmed, Etanercept was started (50 mg/week) and AZA progressively tapered. At 5 months from starting anti-TNFα, she is in good clinical condition with no vasculitic sign. IgG and IgA are currently 1150 and 77 mg/dl, respectively; IgM value improved to 43 mg/dl as well as leucocyte (3920 cell/mm³) and platelet count (120.000/mm³).

DADA2 is a clinically and genetically heterogeneous disease and the clinical presentation and course of the reported case is consistent with recent literature. (5). The identified mutation in our patient has been previously described in a cohort who presented phenotypic variability despite the same genetic mutation (7). In particular, immunological abnormalities, although not always present, are quite variable between patients, sometimes may represent the only expression of this disease, mainly affecting B-cells as in our patient (5, 8). Actually, a current differential approach facing hypogammaglobulinaemia, leukopenia and thrombocytopenia along with cutaneous involvement and systemic inflammation should also include DADA2. In our case, the right diagnostic classification, aiming to potentially prevent a stroke in a child, prompted us to switch to the current recommended treatment, despite the good disease control on AZA. The rapid progress of knowledge prones physicians to keep up to date to better understand the different disease spectrum and achieve the most appropriate care.

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References

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