A new cause of ‘non-responsiveness’ in coeliac disease?

J S R Jennings, J I Wyatt, P D Howdle

Abstract

A 42 year old man presented with gluten-responsive coeliac disease and secondary pancreatic insufficiency. Subsequently his symptoms relapsed and repeat small intestinal biopsy showed villous atrophy and infiltration by leukaemic cells, despite continuation of a gluten-free diet. Serious causes of relapse and non-responsiveness in coeliac disease include enteropathy-associated T-cell lymphoma, ulcerative jejunitis and an end-stage hypoplastic mucosa. This is the first report of non-responsiveness due to infiltration by leukaemia.

(Postgrad Med J 2000;76:227–229)

Keywords: coeliac disease; villous atrophy; gluten sensitivity; leukaemia

Most patients with coeliac disease respond satisfactorily to a gluten-free diet. A small number fail to respond, either initially or after a period of treatment. There are many causes for this.1–3 In such a situation the diagnosis should be carefully reviewed and a search made for serious causes of the non-responsiveness.

Case report

A 42 year old man presented with a 6-month history of severe watery diarrhoea, dehydration and weight loss of 6.4 kg. He had previously been well, although had always had loose stools since childhood. Investigation revealed a macrocytic anaemia with a low serum folate, and subtotal villous atrophy on duodenal biopsy (figure, A). Coeliac disease was diagnosed and a gluten-free diet (GFD) was started.

Seven months later a repeat duodenal biopsy showed significant histological improvement (figure, B), suggesting mucosal gluten-responsiveness and supporting the diagnosis of coeliac disease. However, the diarrhoea was still present and failed to improve, despite the subsequent addition of a lactose-free diet, prednisolone and metronidazole. The macrocytic anaemia had progressed, despite folic acid replacement, and splenomegaly had developed. Bone marrow examination revealed chronic myelomonocytic leukaemia (CMML). He required monthly blood transfusions.

At that stage, 18 months after his initial symptoms and 11 months after starting a GFD, he was referred to us for further assessment of his diarrhoea. He still had watery diarrhoea up to 10 times per day. He was lethargic and had lost a further 6.4 kg in weight. There was no rectal bleeding or abdominal pain. On examination he was thin and wasted, with splenomegaly and mild peripheral oedema.

Investigations directed towards finding the cause of his diarrhoea included: haemoglobin 10.6 g/dl, white cell count $34 \times 10^9/l$, platelets $46 \times 10^9/l$, mean corpuscular volume 108 fl, monocytosis and leucoerythroblastic blood film; prothrombin time 23.8 s, albumin 22 g/l, alkaline phosphatase 679 IU/l, vitamins A and E decreased, ferritin 2310 µg/l, IgA antigliadin positive.

Figure 1  A: original duodenal biopsy illustrating subtotal villous atrophy; B: following a gluten-free diet, small bowel morphology improved to near normal appearance; C: mucosal relapse showing partial villous atrophy with normal enterocytes but an increase in lamina propia cellularity due to involvement with CMML (H + E stain, orig magnification $\times$ 32).
Enteroscopy showed ulceration in the second and third parts of the duodenum. Colonoscopy and small bowel enema were normal. Abdominal computed tomography (CT) scan revealed hepatosplenomegaly and low volume inguinal lymphadenopathy. Pancreolauryl test was low at 18.5% (normal >30%). A SeHCAT scan showed severe bile salt malabsorption.

The histology was reviewed. The initial small intestinal biopsy revealed villous atrophy, crypt hyperplasia and increased numbers of lamina propria and intra-epithelial lymphocytes (figure, A). These changes had improved after 7 months on a GFD (figure, B). The current duodenal and jejunal biopsies (18 months after the initial presentation and after 11 months on a GFD) show a relapse in the mucosal injury (figure, C). Infiltrating lymphocytes were seen but appeared atypical. On immunostaining they were confirmed as large monocytes. This suggested early infiltration by CMML cells. Such cells were not found on earlier slides, and these inflammatory changes were not typical of those seen in coeliac mucosa.

Treatment continued with a GFD and vitamin supplements. Pancreatic replacement therapy was commenced. At 3-month review his symptoms had improved, with considerable resolution of his diarrhoea, and his weight had increased. However, he now required more frequent transfusions and commenced chemotherapy for his CMML.

Eight months later he was re-admitted with further weight loss and malnutrition. He remained IgA antigliadin positive. Enteroscopy revealed disease progression of the CMML in the intestinal mucosa. One month later total parenteral nutrition was commenced prior to a proposed bone marrow transplant. Unfortunately, he died from a septic episode.

This case raises several important questions. First, what was the evidence for coeliac disease? There was a suggestive history of loose stools from childhood. His symptoms certainly suggested malabsorption and he had a small intestinal mucosal abnormality compatible with coeliac disease. On gluten withdrawal the mucosa had improved considerably by 7 months, but he remained symptomatic. In an adult patient this suggests mucosal gluten-responsiveness and would normally be diagnostic of coeliac disease. This would be compatible with the definition based on small bowel pathology proposed by Booth in 1974 and now generally accepted by gastroenterologists. However, this patient did not initially improve clinically, he remained IgA antigliadin positive and therefore did not fulfil the revised ESPGAN criteria for the diagnosis of coeliac disease, albeit in children. In such cases a clinical remission is required, together with the disappearance of circulating antigliadin antibodies. If the diagnosis is in doubt, a gluten challenge is recommended. In this case, the patient was too ill to consider a gluten challenge, but also symptomatic improvement did occur with pancreatic replacement therapy.

Secondary pancreatic insufficiency in coeliac disease is well-described and therefore we feel that once this had been corrected, together with the initial mucosal response to a GFD, there is good evidence for a diagnosis of coeliac disease, even though by this stage the mucosa was becoming involved by early infiltration with CMML. The persistently positive IgA antigliadin antibody would not be inconsistent with a diagnosis of coeliac disease. It can take months or even years for the titre to become negative after institution of a GFD and a remaining mucosal abnormality, whatever the cause, is likely to permit continuing excess IgA production.

The second question revolves around the subsequent mucosal relapse with recurrence of weight loss and malabsorption. This was due to the progressive involvement with CMML. It is rare for CMML to involve the gastro-intestinal tract. We suggest that the intestinal mucosa was predisposed by coeliac disease to subsequent involvement by CMML. The bile

### Learning points
- Coeliac disease is a common cause of malabsorption.
- Villous atrophy, crypt hyperplasia and lymphocytic infiltration of the small intestinal mucosa are characteristic.
- At least 90% of patients respond clinically and histologically to a gluten-free diet.
- Non-response to the diet, either initially or later, may be due to poor dietary compliance, incorrect diagnosis, or a serious complication.
- Serious complications include enteropathy-associated T-cell lymphoma, ulcerative jejunitis or mucosal hypoplasia.
Sweet's syndrome and subacute thyroiditis

Yoav Kalmus, Susy Kovatz, Lotan Shilo, Gazi Ganem, Louis Shenkman

Abstract

A 63 year old woman developed biopsy documented lesions of acute febrile neutrophilic dermatosis (Sweet's syndrome) one week after the onset of subacute thyroiditis. This is only the second reported case of such an association. The role of cytokines in the development of both subacute thyroiditis and Sweet's syndrome may be the link between these two conditions.

Keywords: Sweet's syndrome; thyroiditis; cytokines; thyroid

Sweet's syndrome, or acute febrile neutrophilic dermatosis, is a unique dermatological disorder characterised by tender erythematous or violaceous nodules or plaques on the extremities, trunk, and face. Associated signs and symptoms may include fever, leucocytosis, and a raised erythrocyte sedimentation rate. Originally described by the English dermatologist R D Sweet,1 the disorder was initially considered rare, but with increasing awareness in the past 10 years over 500 cases have been described.

Sweet's syndrome may be the harbinger of malignancy, and many cases have been accompanied or followed by the development of a lymphoproliferative disorder or a solid tumour. While some cases are idiopathic, others have been associated with a variety of disorders. In this report we describe the occurrence of Sweet's syndrome with subacute thyroiditis. This is, to our knowledge, only the second case report of this association. The possible relationship between Sweet's syndrome and subacute thyroiditis is discussed.

Case report

A 63 year old woman was referred to the endocrine clinic because of 10 days of severe neck pain radiating to her ears. She had an unremarkable medical history and had been healthy until this hospitalisation. On admission her blood pressure was 126/68 mm Hg, pulse 100 beats/min, and temperature 38.7°C. The thyroid gland was enlarged and tender. The remainder of the physical examination was normal, and no signs of hyperthyroidism were present. Aside from a raised erythrocyte sedimentation rate of 140 mm/hour, complete blood count, electrolytes, liver function studies, and urinalysis were all normal. Laboratory evidence of hyperthyroidism was present, with a free thyroxine of 35.28 pmol/l (normal range 13.3–23) and total triiodothyronine of 2.73 nmol/l (1.3–3.1). The thyroid stimulating hormone concentration was low, <0.005 mIU/ml (0.27–4.2). A technetium scan of the thyroid revealed no uptake of the isotope, and ultrasound examination of the thyroid showed an enlarged gland. These findings were consistent with a diagnosis of subacute thyroiditis, and the patient was treated with aspirin. Seven days later, reddish oedematous papules developed over her forearms, right elbow, and legs. The lesions gradually coalesced to form plaques with delicate scales in the margins.

A skin biopsy was performed, revealing infiltration of the dermis by neutrophils with no evidence of vasculitis, consistent with the diagnosis of acute febrile neutrophilic dermatosis. One week after the initiation of treatment with aspirin the fever resolved, with gradual improvement of both the skin lesions and the subacute thyroiditis. One month after the onset of her symptoms, all lesions had resolved and laboratory studies returned to normal.

Discussion

Sweet's syndrome has been associated with a variety of systemic disorders including haematological malignancies as well as solid tumours. Non-malignant disorders associated with this syndrome include Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis,2 and sarcoidosis.3 In addition, Sweet's syndrome has been seen in association with

Learning points
- Sweet’s syndrome is acute febrile neutrophilic dermatosis.
- Sweet’s syndrome is characterised by tender, erythematous, or violaceous nodules or plaques.
- It may be a harbinger of malignancy, either solid tumours or lymphoproliferative disorders.
- It may be seen in a variety of other conditions, including inflammatory bowel disease, sarcoidosis, and infections.
- It may be seen with subacute thyroiditis, possibly as a result of immune mediated cytokine expression.

interesting occurrence of Sweet’s syndrome with Takayasu’s arteritis and Hashimoto’s thyroiditis in a 39 year old woman. The patient described in this report developed classical lesions of Sweet’s syndrome one week after the onset of subacute thyroiditis. Although the relationship between these two disorders may have been fortuitous, it is tempting to consider a possible pathogenetic connection. The effect of treatment with interferon alfa on the occurrence of thyroiditis and the development of dermatological inflammatory disorders, including Sweet’s syndrome, hints towards a possible connection via immune mediated side effects of cytokines. However, further cases will have to be reported in order to establish this observation.

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Addison’s disease in type 1 diabetes presenting with recurrent hypoglycaemia

Vincent McAulay, Brian M Frier

Abstract
Primary adrenal insufficiency (Addison’s disease) often develops insidiously. Although a rare disorder, it is more common in type 1 diabetes mellitus. A 19 year old male with type 1 diabetes and autoimmune hypothyroidism experienced recurrent severe hypoglycaemia over several months, despite a reduction in insulin dose, culminating in an adrenal crisis. Recurrent severe hypoglycaemia resolved after identification and treatment of the adenocortical insufficiency. In type 1 diabetes, undiagnosed Addison’s disease can influence glycaemic control and induce severe hypoglycaemia.


Keywords: type 1 diabetes; Addison’s disease; hypoglycaemia; cortisol

Hypoglycaemia is a common side effect of insulin treatment for type 1 diabetes. However, people with diabetes are susceptible to other causes of spontaneous hypoglycaemia that can affect the non-diabetic population. A patient is described who developed recurrent severe hypoglycaemia associated with underlying glucocorticoid deficiency from undiagnosed Addison’s disease.

Case report
A 19 year old male who had developed type 1 diabetes when aged 7 years, was treated with twice daily soluble and isophane insulins. Thyroid microsomal antibodies were present at diagnosis and at the age of 11 years he had developed hypothyroidism requiring thyroxine. There was no family history of autoimmune disease. As a teenager his attendance at the diabetic clinic was erratic and he seldom monitored his
Table 1  Features and treatment of Addison’s disease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common symptoms and signs</th>
<th>Laboratory features</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anorexia</td>
<td>Hyponatraemia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>Hyperkalaemia</td>
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<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Urtica</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nausea and vomiting</td>
<td>Metabolic acidosis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postural dizziness</td>
<td>Hypercalcaemia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weight loss</td>
<td>Normochromic normocytic anaemia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypotension</td>
<td>Eosinophilia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pigmentation</td>
<td>Lymphocytosis</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency treatment</th>
<th>Maintenance therapy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intravenous hydrocortisone 100 mg with 0.9% saline</td>
<td>Primary adrenal failure:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hydrocortisone 15–20 mg am, 5–10 mg at 4 pm or Hydrocortisone 15–20 mg am, 5 mg at noon, 5 mg at 4 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Fludrocortisone 0.05–2 mg am</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary adrenal failure: Hydrocortisone as above</td>
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Addison’s disease is rare, with a reported incidence in the UK of about 5 cases/million population/year and a prevalence of 110 per million, although it is at least five times more common in the diabetic population. It often presents with non-specific features (see table 1), making the diagnosis elusive. An association with type 1 diabetes is well recognised with 10%–18% of patients with Addison’s disease. However, the prevalence of Addison’s disease in type 1 diabetes is reported to be lower at 1.2%. Diabetes precedes the development of adrenocortical insufficiency in most patients.

**Learning points**

- In patients with type 1 diabetes who develop unexplained recurrent hypoglycaemia, the development of an associated endocrinopathy, such as Addison’s disease, should be considered.
- An unexplained reduction of total insulin requirement of more than 15%–20% (in response to recording frequent low blood glucose values) should arouse suspicion of adrenocortical insufficiency. This may precede the clinical features.
- The development of abnormal pigmentation in a patient with type 1 diabetes merits its investigation of adrenocortical function with dynamic tests.
- In children or teenagers with type 1 diabetes a clue to underlying Addison’s disease is a decline in normal growth velocity.
- The diagnosis of adrenocortical insufficiency in a patient with type 1 diabetes requires simultaneous investigation of thyroid function and thyroid autoantibodies; biochemical evidence of hypothyroidism may resolve after glucocorticoid replacement.
- Plasma electrolyte abnormalities are not invariably in adrenal insufficiency until an advanced stage; 20%–30% of patients do not have hyponatraemia or hyperkalaemia at any time.

**Discussion**

This patient with insulin dependent diabetes, who previously had prolonged suboptimal glycaemic control, developed recurrent severe hypoglycaemia without any change in treatment or physical activity. He was presumed to have increased insulin sensitivity secondary to underlying glucocorticoid deficiency, the treatment of which restored his usual total insulin requirement and abolished the hypoglycaemia.

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Galactorrhoea and pituitary mass: a typical prolactinoma?

Michael Brändle, Christoph Schmid

Abstract

A 21 year old woman presenting with galactorrhoea, hyperprolactinaemia, and a pituitary mass on magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is described who was referred to us before planned pituitary surgery. Although a thorough history did not suggest hypothroidism, laboratory studies revealed profound primary hypothyroidism. At that time, pituitary MRI showed homogeneous enlargement of the pituitary gland consistent with pituitary hyperplasia due to primary hypothroidism. With thyroid hormone replacement therapy the galactorrhoea resolved, concentrations of prolactin and thyroid hormones returned to normal, and the pituitary shrunk to normal size within two months. This case illustrates that primary hypothyroidism can present only with galactorrhoea and pituitary mass, and should therefore be considered in the differential diagnosis of hyperprolactinaemia and pituitary enlargement.

Keywords: primary hypothyroidism; galactorrhoea; pituitary mass
Galactorrhoea is a common symptom of hyperprolactinaemia in premenopausal women. The most frequent causes of pathological hyperprolactinaemia are pituitary tumours and drugs with dopamine antagonist properties, whereas less common aetiologies include hypothalamic disease, chronic renal failure, liver cirrhosis, breast disease, chest wall trauma, spinal cord lesion, and primary hypothyroidism.

However, in patients with primary hypothyroidism galactorrhoea is a rare feature compared with the typical symptoms such as fatigue, weight gain, cold intolerance, constipation, dry skin, and myopathy.

We describe a patient initially presenting with galactorrhoea and pituitary enlargement, but without any other characteristic symptoms suggesting primary hypothyroidism.

Case report
A 21 year old woman (born in 1977) had a two year history of increasing galactorrhoea. Six months earlier, she had started a hormonal contraception with a triphasic combination of oestrogens (ethinyloestradiol) and progestins (gestodene). In the past, her menstrual cycle had been normal and regular, since menarche at the age of 13 (in 1990). In October 1997 mild hyperprolactinaemia (prolactin 37.7 µg/l) was found and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) revealed a 8 mm sized pituitary tumour.

In January 1998, she was admitted to our outpatient endocrinology division for preoperative evaluation of the pituitary tumour and galactorrhoea. She complained of galactorrhoea cyclically increasing before menstrual bleeding. She did not suffer any other symptoms nor take any medication except for the oral contraceptive. She went to a teacher training college and was fit. Physical examination revealed a healthy appearing woman of normal weight (59.5 kg) and height (169 cm) with a regular heart rate of 64 beats/min, a blood pressure of 132/88 mm Hg, normal voice, skin, hair, nails, and thyroid gland. Bilateral expressible galactorrhoea was present. The ankle jerks showed a markedly delayed relaxation phase. Haematological tests revealed a low haemoglobin of 113 g/l (normal range 123–158 g/l) and packed cell volume of 0.353 (0.37–0.47). Blood chemistry showed raised concentrations of total cholesterol of 9.3 mmol/l and total creatine kinase activity of 917 U/l (<150 U/l). The endocrinological tests confirmed hyperprolactinaemia (prolactin 118 µg/l, normal range 2–20) and disclosed primary hypothyroidism with low free thyroxine (3.1 pmol/l, normal range 8.5–19.0), low free triiodothyronine (1.5 pmol/l, normal range 3.5–6.2), and markedly increased thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) (506.75 mU/l, normal range 0.1–4.0). Thyroglobulin and thyroid peroxidase antibodies were raised, suggesting autoimmune thyroid disease.

Pituitary MRI performed at that time showed homogeneous enlargement of the pituitary gland (12 × 10 mm in diameter) with a convex suprasellar expansion and without any signs of a focal lesion, consistent with pituitary hyperplasia due to primary hypothyroidism (fig 1A).

The patient was advised to stop taking the oral contraceptive, and thyroxine replacement was initiated with 50 µg levothyroxine daily for two weeks and then increased to 100 µg daily.

One month later the galactorrhoea resolved, and spontaneous regular menstrual bleeding returned after six weeks. In April 1998, upon two months of thyroxine substitution, free thyroxine (16.4 pmol/l), free triiodothyronine (4.4 pmol/l) and prolactin (12.7 µg/l) concentrations were normal, and TSH was only slightly raised (7.66 mU/l). On repeat MRI of the sellar region, the volume of the pituitary had shrunk to normal size (8.5 × 9 mm in diameter; fig 1B).

![Figure 1](http://pmj.bmj.com/) Mid-sagittal T1 weighted magnetic resonance imaging of the sellar region: (A) on 12 February 1998, showing homogeneous enlargement of the pituitary gland with convex suprasellar expansion, measuring 12 mm in height, without any signs of a focal lesion and (B) on 14 April after two months of thyroxine replacement showing significant shrinkage of the pituitary gland to normal configuration and height, 8.5 mm.
Advanced testicular cancer presenting with phlegmasia cerulea dolens

C Mulatero, G Brogan, R T D Oliver

Abstract
A case of fulminating deep venous thrombosis secondary to invasion of the inferior vena cava is described in a 45 year old man presenting with a germ cell tumour. Despite aggressive supportive care and emergency chemotherapy his late presentation caused his death. The case highlights the necessity for increased public education of the attendant risks in delayed presentation with a testicular lump. (Postgrad Med J 2000;76:234–236)

Keywords: phlegmasia cerulea dolens; testicular carcinoma

Discussion
The presentation of our patient with galactorrhoea, hyperprolactinaemia, and a pituitary mass suggested, at first glance, the diagnosis of prolactinoma rather than primary hypothyroidism. Hypothyroidism can cause a broad range of signs and symptoms. Manifestation with galactorrhoea is rare, but well known.6,7 Prolactin concentrations greater than 25 µg/l were found in about 10% of patients with hypothyroidism.5 Hyperprolactinaemia results from increased thyrotrophin releasing hormone (TRH) production and increased sensitivity of lactotrophs to TRH.5

Exogenous oestrogen supply by oral contraceptives may favour hyperprolactinaemia as well as galactorrhoea by actions at both the pituitary and the breast level.8,9 In addition, hypothyroidism slows the metabolism of oestrogen and thereby may further increase the effect of ethinyloestradiol. Profound hypothyroidism often causes hypogonadism with amenorrhoea. In states of oestrogen deficiency, hyperprolactinaemia rarely causes galactorrhoea. Galactorrhoea typically occurs in hypothyroid patients with hyperprolactinaemia and normal or high concentrations of oestrogens, especially during hormonal contraception and after pregnancy.7

It is known that patients with longstanding primary hypothyroidism may have pituitary enlargement visible on MRI or computed tomography.7 This enlargement is related to chronically decreased circulating thyroid hormones and subsequent hypersecretion of TSH and thyrotroph cell hyperplasia. The pituitary hyperplasia could be mistaken for a pituitary tumour, especially prolactinoma, and patients could undergo unnecessary operation with considerable complications.6,8 Thyroxine replacement for primary hypothyroidism resolves galactorrhoea and amenorrhoea, causes the prolactin concentrations to return to normal, and results in rapid regression of pituitary size (fig 1B).6,8-10 Thus it is important to check thyroid function in all patients with hyperprolactinaemia as well as in patients with pituitary enlargement before the diagnosis of prolactinoma is made. Other secondary causes of hyperprolactinaemia should also be excluded.

Learning points
- Profound biochemical hypothyroidism may exist in apparently healthy individuals with minimal clinical evidence of hypothyroidism.
- Not every patient with galactorrhoea, hyperprolactinaemia, and a pituitary mass has a prolactinoma.
- Hypothyroidism should always be considered in the differential diagnosis of hyperprolactinaemia and in the differential diagnosis of pituitary enlargement.

References
over the necessity for surgery on the next operating list. It is obvious in the minority of patients with choriocarcinoma, a condition that can be screened for on the basis of a positive urinary pregnancy test, that delay should be avoided as it can double every six days and kill in six weeks. However, experiencing a patient who died within a week of first presentation with venous infarction induced gangrene and rhabdomyolysis induced renal failure is a reminder of the fatal problems that can develop from delay in less malignant cases.

Case report
A 45 year old man presented to the casualty department describing a two week history of painless left testicular swelling and a two day history of leg muscle cramp, weakness, stiffness, and oedema. He had attended his general practitioner the previous day but he had not performed a general or testicular examination. The patient had no past history of hypertension, renal disease, scrotal surgery, or testicular trauma. He lived in a separate unit within a house with his uncle. Three years previously he had lost both parents and shortly afterwards he was made redundant from work as a security guard. He had become moderately reclusive but did not drink alcohol.

On examination he was drowsy but rousable. He was apyrexial and had no palpable lymphadenopathy. There was a large indistinct central mass in his abdomen and a 10 cm2 firm, non-tender scrotal swelling. Both legs were grossly oedematous with peripheral discoloration, reduced capillary refill, and impalpable peripheral pulses.

A urinary pregnancy test was positive. Ultrasound examination revealed a right hydrenephrotic kidney, and bilateral femoral vein thromboses secondary to the large abdominal mass. After resuscitation the patient was transferred for urgent right nephrostomy tube insertion to relieve pressure on the inferior vena cava. Vena caval invasion is a well recognised but relatively rare complication of testicular tumours. Vena caval invasion more frequently occurs with right sided tumours, as the sentinel lymph node on this side is usually the iliac node involvement in this patient is more commonly seen after scrotal surgery. Literature review failed to identify a report of phlegmasia cerulea dolens in testis cancer patients. In our records of more than 300 cases with metastatic testis cancer there are six cases with vena caval invasion and one with Budd-Chiari syndrome. Despite hepatorenal failure that resulted his general practitioner on the day before presenting to hospital, and had he been diagnosed his life might have been saved as renal failure due to rhabdomyolysis is reversible if the cause is resolved.

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The patient became hypotensive and anuric despite insertion of a right nephrostomy tube. His renal failure was initially treated medically with dopamine. The sepsis was treated with intravenous antibiotics. An intravenous heparin infusion was started in view of the venous thrombosis. He received high dose dexamethasone to reduce peritumoral inflammation and allopurinol to counteract potential tumour lysis syndrome. Emergency chemotherapy was given in an attempt to shrink the tumour mass and relieve pressure on the inferior vena cava. Because of the poor renal function he received a small dose of carboplatin (100 mg), etoposide (250 mg), and subcutaneous bleomycin (15 units).

His condition deteriorated progressively and haemodialysis started on the third day. Despite these measures ischaemia and gangrene progressed rendering surgical salvage impossible. Further dialysis was withheld and he died six days after his initial presentation.

Discussion
This patient’s reclusive personality undoubtedly resulted in delayed presentation. He consulted his general practitioner on the day before presenting to hospital, and had he been diagnosed his life might have been saved as renal failure due to rhabdomyolysis is reversible if the cause is resolved.

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Figure 1 Contrast enhanced computed tomography immediately caudal to the aortic bifurcation.
Learning points

- Phlegmasia cerulea dolens is a rare complication of testicular carcinoma.
- Continued patient education of the need for early presentation with testicular masses is necessary.

to conventional treatment two weeks after resolution of the thrombus. He is alive at 10 year follow up.

This case illustrates that there is still a need for public education about testis cancer as late presentation may reduce survival. A critical lesson for all health care professionals is to be vigilant for testicular cancer in men with non-specific symptoms.

Addison's disease in type 1 diabetes presenting with recurrent hypoglycaemia

Vincent McAulay and Brian M Frier

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