Long uvula: an unusual cause of chronic cough
V Pai, H Thomas, C Stewart

Chronic cough is a distressing symptom for patients and parents in paediatric practice. Investigations of the child with persistent cough can be simple or complex depending on the underlying cause. There are some unusual reasons for chronic cough, which need to be kept in mind when investigating the cause. A case of a long, floppy uvula causing chronic cough through mechanical irritation of upper airway is reported.

Cough is an important protective reflex of the body. But when this protective reflex turns into persistent cough, a common problem in paediatric practice, it can become an extremely distressing symptom for patients and parents. Infection is one of the most common causes for acute cough, whereas chronic inflammation and mechanical irritation are common causes of chronic cough. In paediatric practice, asthma is a prime example of persistent cough.

There are some unusual causes of chronic cough, which if not looked for can lead to unnecessary investigations and treatment. We would like to present an unusual cause of chronic cough to illustrate our point.

CASE REPORT
A 1 year old boy was referred with the history of spasmodic cough since the age of 6 weeks. This distressing cough usually ended in vomiting with variable symptomatic relief. The coughing episodes were mainly observed during the daytime and often precipitated by a semisolid or solid diet. The coughing episodes were mainly observed during the daytime and often precipitated by a semisolid or solid diet. There was no history of cold, temperature, or breathlessness associated with it.

Apart from this distressing symptom, he was asymptomatic and thriving well. His growth was appropriate for his age. He was born by emergency lower segment caesarean section with birth weight of 3200 g. His neonatal period was uneventful. He was fully immunised and had not come in contact with whooping cough.

The patient’s father is from Morocco and as a young child he underwent uvulectomy. This is a common ritual/tradition in the Muslim community, uvulectomy is an ancient ritual/tradition and is as common as circumcision. There are various case reports and commentaries from the literature in 1970–80. Uvulectomies are normally performed by traditional healers and is as common as circumcision. There are various case reports and commentaries from the literature in 1970–80. Uvulectomies are normally performed by traditional healers with indifferent results.

There are case reports of the uvula causing apnoea due to irritation of the epiglottis or vocal cords. Uvulectomy led to relief from these symptoms. In Africa, especially in the Muslim community, uvulectomy is an ancient ritual/tradition and is as common as circumcision. There are various case reports and commentaries from the literature in 1970–80. Uvulectomies are normally performed by traditional healers with indifferent results.

This case report illustrates the importance of eliciting a family history in reaching the diagnosis as well as the need for thorough examination for unusual signs, which can point towards the aetiology. Unusual aetiology must be kept in mind if the usual causes do not seem to solve the problem.

Author’s affiliations
V Pai, Royal Alexandra Children’s Hospital, Dyke Road, Brighton BN1 3JN, UK
H Thomas, C Stewart, Southmead Hospital, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, UK

Correspondence to: Dr Pai, binapai@hotmail.com
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