Extensive Dermatitis due to Warfarin Sodium (Coumadin)

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WARFARIN SODIUM, 3-(alpha-acetonylbenzyl)-4-hydroxycoumarin sodium, (Coumadin) is one of several popular anticoagulant agents used to delay intravascular clotting by depression of the prothrombin level of the blood. This drug is often used in instances in which there is an acute thrombophlebitis, pulmonary and peripheral embolism, coronary and cerebral thrombosis, and it is employed prophylactically to prevent arterial embolization and thrombosis.1-4

Excessive lowering of circulating prothrombin with spontaneous hemorrhage is the important complication in the use of this prothrombinemic agent.4,5 Five per cent of the patients who receive anticoagulant therapy develop mild hemorrhagic manifestations such as hematuria, hemoptysis, epistaxis, and ecchymosis. These are readily controlled by the administration of vitamin K1. Approximately 2 per cent of patients develop more severe hemorrhagic phenomena such as hemorrhhrosis, gastrointestinal, cerebral, or subarachnoid hemorrhage, or purpura. These complications demand early recognition and the prompt use of vitamin K1 or blood transfusion.6-8

Sheps and Gifford9 first reported an allergic manifestation of warfarin sodium. In that instance, transient urticaria appeared in a 50-year-old man, 40 minutes after the oral administration of 50 mg. of warfarin sodium. Subsequently, bishydroxycoumarin was administered without reaction. Extensive dermatitis has not previously been reported as a complication of warfarin sodium therapy.

Case Report

A 63-year-old white man developed an acute inferior myocardial infarction 7 weeks prior to the onset of an acute cerebral arterial thrombosis with aphasia and hemiplegia.

While hospitalized for the myocardial infarc-

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Conclusion

Severe dermatitis involving the skin and mucous membranes followed the use of warfarin sodium (Coumadin). Lesions disappeared with steroid therapy but recurred upon challenge with warfarin sodium. Upon elimination of this drug, the skin and oral lesions disappeared. The patient had no allergic manifestations following the administration ofbishydroxycoumarin.

Summario in Interlingua

Dermatitis sever, afficiente le pelle e le membranas mucose, sequeva le uso de warfarina a natrium (Coumadina). Le lesiones dispareva con le uso de un therapia steroidic, sed illos recurreva post le provocacion con warfarina a natrium. Post le suspension del droga, le lesiones cutaneae e oral dispareva. Le patiente habeva nulle manifestaciones allergie post le administration de bishydroxyecoumarina.

References

Of the three characteristics of living tissue—adaptation, growth, and reproduction—the last, reproduction, provides the most searching question to be asked if we want to test for vitality and continuity. Keepers of zoos begin to feel at ease when their more exotic animals succeed in producing their own kind in captivity. Since medical education replenishes the professions that provide medical care, and since medical care is changing in important ways, we must be on guard to make sure that none of the new factors or practices of medical care threatens the continuity of medical education.—Alan Gregg, M.D. Challenges to Contemporary Medicine. New York, Columbia University Press, 1956, p. 87.
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