marked in pulmonary embolism, but the “casual” conduction defect involves only one portion of the left bundle branch.  

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REFERENCES

Pulmonary Hypertension and Leukemia

To the Editor:

I read with great interest the report by Rossoff and colleagues of a man with a CDS/T-cell large granulocyte leukemia and “primary” pulmonary hypertension ameliorated by treatment with cladribine (August 1997). Several features of the patient’s pulmonary disease are striking for their similarity to those of tumor microembolism, leading me to wonder if “pulmonary tumor microangiopathy” might be a more apt diagnosis.

The multiple bilateral subpleural shallow perfusion defects seen on the perfusion scan sound much like the “contour mapping” classically seen with lymphangitic carcinomatosis and tumor microembolism. Similarly, the described pathologic changes of the vessels are akin to those that may occur consequent to tumor microembolism. These changes of thrombosis, organization, and especially intimal proliferation with luminal obliteration, termed pulmonary tumor microangiopathy by von Herbay et al., were first recognized a century ago. They have since been described in numerous patients with tumor embolism, as recently reviewed.

Pulmonary tumor microangiopathy occurs in reaction to circulating malignant cells, usually carcinomas, lodging within the pulmonary vasculature. Pathologically, the condition resembles plexogenic arteriopathy. Although malignant cells can usually be seen in the vessels, the vascular changes are sufficiently characteristic to justify suspicion of tumor microembolism—even when the tumor cells themselves are not visualized—in the appropriate clinical setting.

I believe this case presents an appropriate setting; although the terms tumor and embolism don’t apply with leukemia, the key feature of circulating malignant cells impacting in the pulmonary circulation is analogous. I would argue that the reported case is not one of remitting “primary” pulmonary hypertension, but is instead the first reported case of pulmonary tumor microangiopathy occurring with leukemia. The remission of the patient’s pulmonary hypertension is particularly exciting viewed in this light, as it suggests that pulmonary tumor microangiopathy is a potentially reversible process. The question of why some circulating malignant cells should trigger such a vasculopathy in the lung, while the majority clearly do not, is intriguing. This case is a reminder that the diagnosis of “primary” pulmonary hypertension should be made with extreme caution in the presence of a malignancy—including, apparently, a hematologic one.

REFERENCES

Asthma Therapy Clarified

To the Editor:

I am writing to express our concern regarding a recent editorial, “Asthma Therapy: What’s New and Is It Necessarily Better?” (July 1997). In this editorial, Dr. Georgitis wrote: “Clearly, physicians should document the total microgram dose per day of inhaled corticosteroids for patients (ie, beclomethasone 336 µg X 4, triamcinolone 600 µg X 4, fluticasone 440 µg X 4, or budesonide 1000 µg X 4 per day).”

While the author may have simply intended to suggest that clinicians document inhaled corticosteroids use in their patients, some readers may infer that this budesonide dosage regimen is acceptable. It is not. The maximum recommended adult dose of budesonide via Pulmicort Turbuhaler (Astra; Westborough, Mass) is 800 µg twice daily (1600 µg daily), not 4000 µg daily as the regimen given would suggest.

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REFERENCE
1. Georgitis JW. Asthma therapy: what’s new and is it necessarily better? Chest 1997; 112:3-5

To the Editor:

In my editorial, dosages for the inhaled corticosteroids were cited as examples. The correct inhaled dosage is presented in the tables from the new asthma guidelines, expert panel report 2. This is important because the doses for children are much lower than those for adults, and there are specific daily dose ranges for low, medium, and high doses. In the sentence noted by Dr. Baker, the “X4” should be deleted so that the sentence reads correctly in that total daily dose of the inhaled corticosteroid is documented in the patient record.

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REFERENCES

The Editor:

Recent studies have suggested that pulmonary hypertension may occur in patients with hematologic malignancies, particularly those with large granulocyte leukemia. Rossoff et al. reported a patient with CDS/T-cell large granulocyte leukemia and pulmonary hypertension who showed improvement with cladribine therapy. The pathologic features of pulmonary microangiopathy and the clinical response to treatment with cladribine suggest a potential role for this drug in the management of pulmonary microangiopathy associated with leukemia. Further investigation is needed to determine the efficacy of cladribine in treating pulmonary hypertension in patients with hematologic malignancies.