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Sinobronchial Syndrome, Not Upper Airway Cough Syndrome: Clinical characteristics and Outcome of Low Dose Erythromycin Therapy in Thailand

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Background and Aim of Study

Sinobronchial syndrome (SBS) is a well characterized chronic neutrophilic inflammatory disorder of upper and lower airways in Japan that is rare in western countries. ¹

The clinical pictures are somewhat similar to but not as well recognized as upper airway cough syndrome(UACS). Treatment of these two disorders is entirely different, the former responds well to low dose erythromycin(LDEM), but not to treatment for the later. As SBS is less well recognized, it could be readily mistaken for the later. This study aims to uncover SBS in patients who had been adequately treated for UACS but their cough was not satisfactorily controlled.

Methods

Retrospective study was conducted in Central Chest Institute of Thailand between 2010-2012. Patients who still had trouble with unresolved cough with their current treatment were assessed and treated with LDEM. According to the Japanese Respiratory Society guidelines.¹ the diagnosis of SBS was simply made when all of the following criteria are met (1) Chronic productive cough lasting longer than 8 weeks, (2) Any one of followings: (2.1) clearing throat (2.2) post nasal drip (2.3) cobble stone appearance and/ or secretion deposition on the posterior pharynx (2.4) imaging evidence of sinusitis, and (3) These are responsive to LDEM (500 mg/day)

Good response was considered for the decrease by more than half, while excellent response was free/almost free of cough following LDEM.

Results

45 males and 74 females, ages 15-93 years [N=119] had met the diagnostic criteria for SBS. They had been treated for COPD 7, asthma 30, UACS 7, old pulmonary TB 18, bronchiectasis 43, and bronchitis14. Notably, they still had non resolving cough during their treatment. Nevertheless, they successfully responded following LDEM.51 and 68 patients had good and excellent response respectively.

Conclusion

From this study, SBS should be appreciated. It could occur with or without chronic airway conditions. As the diagnosis as well as treatment is simple, it should not be overlooked when evaluating chronic productive cough in patients with *unremitting cough (with or without associated concurrent chronic airway conditions)* that

is not satisfactorily controlled despite appropriate treatment.² It is believed that SBS should be important for Asian people.

(Declaration of conflict of interest: none)

References

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