

A Case of Microscopic Colitis in a Patient with Acute Hepatitis E

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Background: Microscopic colitis is an inflammatory bowel disease characterized by chronic non-bloody, watery diarrhea with endoscopic findings of normal colonic mucosa and distinct histopathologic features. Diagnosis of microscopic colitis can be challenging as it can be mistaken by other causes of diarrhea. Until now, there has been no report of microscopic colitis in a patient with acute hepatitis E in Korea. Here we report a case of microscopic colitis in a patient with acute hepatitis E.

Case: A 49-year-old woman visited emergency department for jaundice and diarrhea had started 3 weeks ago. She had no medical history. Complete blood count showed white blood cell 17,700/mm³, hemoglobin 11.4 g/dL and platelet 347,000/mm³. Prothrombin time (INR) was 1.7. Biochemical tests showed BUN 2 mg/dL, creatinine 0.5 mg/dL, CRP 1.54 mg/dL, total bilirubin 15 mg/dL, direct bilirubin 13 mg/dL, AST 80 IU/L, ALT 10 IU/L, ALP 214 IU/L, r-GTP 64 U/L. Abdominal CT scan showed periportal edema and secondary gallbladder wall thickening compatible with acute hepatitis. HEV IgM antibody was positive and other viral markers were all negative. Serum ANA and AMA was negative. We concluded that the etiology of jaundice was acute hepatitis E. After 2 weeks of admission, her liver function showed improvement. But diarrhea persisted despite the medical treatment including antibiotics and antidiarrheal agents. We performed a colonoscopy and colonoscopic biopsy. The colonoscopy showed edematous mucosal change of entire colon without definite mucosal lesion. Histologic examination revealed a surface epithelium with a slightly degenerated appearance and increased number of intraepithelial lymphocytes compatible with lymphocytic colitis. The patient was treated with 40mg of oral prednisolone and the symptoms dramatically improved after the treatment with corticosteroids. The patient was discharged without serious complication.

Conclusions: If persistent diarrhea is present in a patient with acute viral hepatitis, colonoscopic biopsy is mandatory for differential diagnosis of diarrhea.

