

Two cases of acute factitious thyrotoxicosis with mild clinical manifestation and complete recovery

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Factitious thyrotoxicosis is a hyperthyroid state caused by exogenous intake of excessive thyroid hormones and usually developed in patients with unstable mental state or neuropsychiatric disorder. Previous studies suggested that factitious thyrotoxicosis could cause life threatening condition including fatal arrhythmia and thyrotoxic storm. Here, we present two cases of factitious thyrotoxicosis with mild clinical course and complete recovery. A 34-year-old woman visited emergency room after taking 100 tablets of levothyroxine 50mcg for suicide. She had got thyroid lobectomy for thyroid cancer 2 years ago and childbirth 2 months ago. She was alert and vital signs were as follows: BP 137/75, HR 75 bpm, RR 20, SpO2 98%, BT 37.5°C and ECG normal sinus rhythm(NSR). Thyroid function test revealed T3 was 1.05ng/mL, Free T4 was 10.16ng/dL and TSH was 0.01μU/mL. She underwent gastric lavage and stopped levothyroxine for 2 weeks. After discharge, according to outpatient follow-up thyroid function test, T3 was 0.98ng/mL and free T4 was 0.90ng/dL. She started retaking levothyroxine 50mcg daily. A 77-year-old man, treated for diabetes mellitus, chronic kidney disease, atrial fibrillation, benign prostate hyperplasia and amiodarone-induced hypothyroidism, was referred to emergency room due to continuous vomiting after consuming 80 tablets of levothyroxine 88mcg and 80 tablets of silodosin 8mg. He suffered from dementia but did not receive proper treatment. His mental state was alert and vital signs were stable(BP 142/105, HR 45bpm, RR 18, SpO2 100%, BT 35.8 ° C and ECG NSR 75bpm). Serum thyroid hormone levels were T3 1.11ng/mL, free T4 5.72ng/dL and TSH 1.11μU/mL. Gastric lavage and bowel preparation were performed to remove remain drugs. He did not take levothyroxine for 13 days. At the endocrinology outpatient clinic, all thyroid hormone levels were within normal range(T3 0.73ng/mL, free T4 1.14ng/dL, TSH 3.51μU/mL) and he started levothyroxine 88mcg daily. Our study suggests acute factitious thyrotoxicosis can be recovered without serious complications after immediate discontinuation of levothyroxine and conservative care, in contrast to chronic overuse of thyroid hormone.

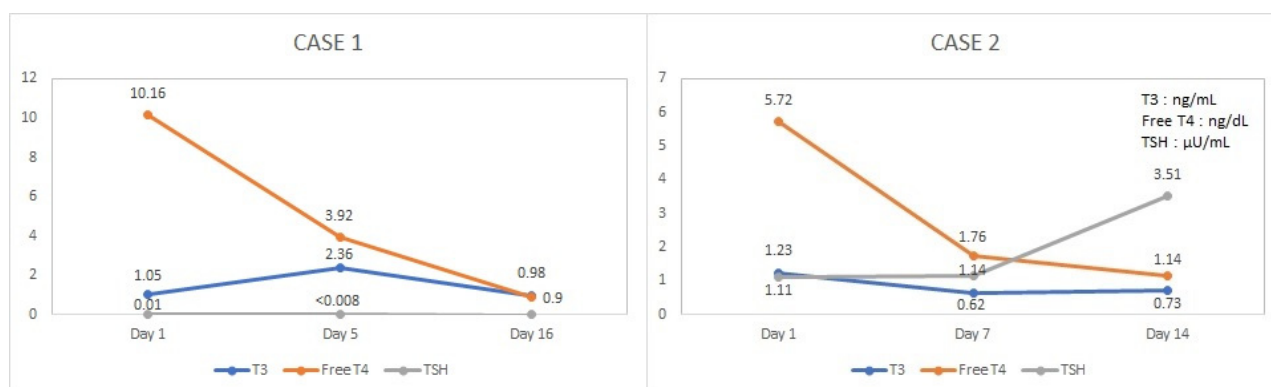


Figure 1. Changes in thyroid hormone levels over time