Acetazolamide Therapy and Intracranial Pressure

Str—We read with interest the article entitled “A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Trial of Acetazolamide for the Treatment of Elevated Intracranial Pressure in Cryptococcal Meningitis” by Newton et al. [1], which evaluated the addition of acetazolamide to standard regimens for cryptococcal meningitis. This important study question is frequently raised not only of patients with cryptococcal meningitis, but also of those with CNS coccidioidomycosis. Though their study was ended because of unacceptable electrolyte abnormalities and adverse events, Newton et al. [1] postulated that there may be subsets of patients who would benefit from the use of acetazolamide. We concur that this is likely and report our experience using acetazolamide to treat 2 patients with persistent, symptomatic elevation of intracranial pressure (ICP) following completion of antifungal therapy for fungal meningitis.

One of our patients had meningitis secondary to Cryptococcus neoformans and the other had meningitis due to Coccioidoides immitis. Both patients were immunocompetent and without significant medical conditions. One patient received amphotericin B/fluconazole and the other patient received fluconazole, and both patients underwent serial lumbar punctures. Both continued to have elevated ICP after their initial antifungal treatment course and, despite chronic fluconazole therapy and sterilization of their CSF, both had significant papilledema with visual impairment. For the patient with cryptococcal meningitis, a 2-month course of acetazolamide therapy at a total dose of 500 mg/day was associated with resolution of the papilledema and restoration of visual acuity. The patient with C. immitis meningitis required 4 years of acetazolamide therapy; intermittent discontinuation of acetazolamide resulted in recurrence of the papilledema and restoration of visual acuity. Acetazolamide resulted in recurrence of the papilledema and restoration of visual acuity. Acetazolamide is an attractive adjuvant therapy because it is noninvasive, easily implemented, and has relatively few side effects in patients who are not receiving nephrotoxic agents. Acetazolamide may be used to reverse chronically elevated ICP due to fungal meningitides and deserves further investigation.

Sugat Patel, Edith Lederman, and Mark Wallace
Department of Internal Medicine, Naval Medical Center San Diego, California

References


Reprints or correspondence: Dr. Sugat Patel, Clinical Investigation Dept. (KCA), Naval Medical Center San Diego, 34800 Bob Wilson Drive, Ste. 5, San Diego, CA 92124-1005 (skpatel@nmcmed.navy.mil).

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