Trousseau's Syndrome in Association with Ovarian Cancer: A Case Report

Wei-Pang Hsu1,2, Yang-Tse Shih3, Wea-Lung Lin4 and Pei-Ching Hsiao2,3,6

Thrombosis was recognized as a complication of cancer by Trousseau in 1865. Since then the combination of these two conditions is often called Trousseau's syndrome. There are many causes of thrombosis in cancer. Cancer itself is often the major risk factor. But the real mechanisms are still under investigation. Malignancy has been ranked as the leading cause of death in Taiwan since 1982. In association with the aging population of countries, cancer-associated thrombosis may occur more frequently in the near future.

We present a postmenopausal woman who suffered from lower left leg venous thrombosis. Intravenous heparin treatment was initially given and later shifted to oral anticoagulant therapy. Within 3 months, the patient experienced a relapse of symptoms, only this time in the right leg. When the patient was first hospitalized, serology tests excluded: collagen disease, vasculitis, and hematologic disorders. Duplex ultrasound confirmed the diagnosis of lower left leg venous thrombosis. During the patient's second hospitalization, coexisting uterine myoma was highly suspected and laparoscopically-assisted vaginal hysterectomy was arranged. After the operation, pathology revealed serous papillary cystadenocarcinoma of bilateral ovaries with metastasis to the endometrium and corpus. We revised the diagnosis to Trousseau's syndrome in association with ovarian cancer. The patient asked to be transferred to another hospital. In the following 4 years, the patient underwent the aforementioned treatment and associated managements including hospice care, but later died due to multiple metastasis. We discuss the mechanisms of Trousseau's syndrome and guidelines regarding the use of anticoagulants in Trousseau's syndrome and cancer patients by literature review. The purpose of this paper is to remind clinicians to consider Trousseau's syndrome as a differential diagnosis of recurrent lower leg venous thrombosis and initiate appropriate anticoagulant therapy.

(Taiwan J Fam Med 2009; 19: 174-80)

Key words: Trousseau's syndrome, ovarian cancer

1Department of Family Medicine, Cheng Ching Hospital; Institute of Medicine2 and School of Medicine1, Chung Shan Medical University; Departments of Gynecology and Obstetrics3, Pathology4, Internal Medicine5, Chung Shan Medical University Hospital, Taichung, Taiwan.

Received: June 3, 2009; Accepted: November 14, 2009.

Address for correspondence and reprint requests to: Dr. Pei-Ching Hsiao, Dept. of Int Med, Chung Shan Medical University Hospital, 110, Sec.1, Chien-kuo N. Road, Taichung, Taiwan.