Clinical and Hormonal Characteristics of a Series of patients Affected by Inappropriate TSH Syndrome: Insights Into the Differential Diagnosis

Sefika Burcak Polat, Cevdet Aydin, Gulsem Kaya, Neslihan Cuhaci, Reyhan Ersoy, Bekir Cakir

Yildirim Beyazit University, Ataturk Education and Research Hospital, Endocrinology and Metabolism Department

OBJECTIVE

- Normal or elevated TSH level in the presence of elevated T4 is defined as “inappropriate TSH syndrome”.
- Two main clinical conditions that can lead that syndrome are TSH secreting adenoma (TSHoma) and resistance to thyroid hormone (RTH).
- Making the correct diagnosis is crucial in order to decide the most appropriate treatment option.
- Herein we presented clinical and laboratory data of seven patients who were hospitalized for the differential diagnosis of the two clinical entities.

METHODS

- Our database was reviewed for the patients diagnosed with inappropriate TSH syndrome at our hospital between 2010-2014
- After exclusion of the other rare causes of inappropriate TSH syndrome, seven patients who were hospitalized for the differential diagnosis of TSHoma and RTH were included in this report

RESULTS

- Age of the patients was changing between 20 and 52 years.
- Clinically two patients were asymptomatic, three had tachycardia and weight loss and one had goiter.
- Final diagnosis was RTH in four patients, TSHoma in two and unequivocal in one.
- Two patients diagnosed with TSHoma were operated and had positive staining with TSH.
- Both of the TSHoma cases had macroadenoma on pituitaryMRI and visual field defect while two of four patients with RTH had microadenoma.
- Alpha-subunit/TSH molar ratio was above 1 in all patients diagnosed with TSHoma while it exceeded 1 in two patients with the final diagnosis of RTH.

CONCLUSION

- Differential diagnosis of RTH and TSHoma can be a clinical challenge and requires complex hormonal tests and imaging methods. Since incidental pituitary tumors are not rare, presence of an adenoma should not rule out diagnosis of RTH.

Figure 1: Macroadenomas in two patients with TSHoma detected with pituitary MRI

Figure 2: Microadenoma of the 4th patient diagnosed with RTH

Figure 3: Appearance of the macroadenoma on octreotide scan in case 6