CLIPPERS - A Stroke Mimic or Diagnosis of Exclusion
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BACKGROUND

Chronic lymphocytic inflammation with pontine perivascular enhancement responsive to steroids (CLIPPERS) is a rare autoimmune inflammatory disorder, characterized by a prodrome of symptoms mimicking posterior circulation stroke. The clinical presentation can be variable, including dysphagia, ataxia, and dysarthria. The symptoms can be subacute to chronic which makes the diagnosis challenging. The distinguishing characteristics of magnetic resonance imaging include gadolinium-enhancing punctate lesions on the pons in a perivascular pattern.

CASE PRESENTATION

A 26-year-old female presented with sub-acute symptoms of lower limbs weakness, ataxia and diplopia. Her past medical history was insignificant with no recent fever, vaccination or trauma. Neurological examination revealed horizontal nystagmus, ataxia and proximal weakness in the lower limbs. Extensive workup including CSF (cell count, cytology, protein, oligoclonal bands), COVID PCR, autoimmune profile (IgG4, ANA, dsDNA, ANCA, C3, C4), Toxoplasmosis and Syphilis were all negative. MRI Brain showed micronodular enhancement and confluent FLAIR hyperintensity at the cervico-medullary junction and lower brainstem (including pons) with subtle finding of confluent FLAIR hyperintensity of the surface of the brainstem.

Figures: The image shows numerous micronodular enhancements at the lower brainstem including pons with subtle finding of confluent FLAIR hyperintensity of the surface of the brainstem.

CONCLUSION

An inflammatory condition of the central nervous system known as Chronic lymphocytic inflammation with pontine perivascular enhancement responsive to steroids (CLIPPERS) is both clinical and a radiological dilemma. It’s variable presentation, lack of specific investigations and unknown etiology makes it challenging. Failure to recognize early can lead to severe disability.

REFERENCES

- And other referenced studies.