

Joint Involvement Revealing Celiac Disease of the Elderly

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Celiac disease (CD) or gluten-sensitive enteropathy is an autoimmune disease related to gluten intestinal allergy that typically occurs in childhood and young age (Dos Santos S 2016, Iqbal T 2013, Jericho H 2016). Late-onset forms (after 60 years) are far from rare but often underestimated in current medical practice: their frequency is estimated at 2.5 to 7.2% (Tortora R 2016, Sabel'nikova EA 2010). We report an original case of CD in an elderly patient revealed by joint damage.

Observation: A 62-year-old patient with no significant pathological history was explored for inflammatory polyarthralgia of large and small joints that were both acute and disabling. The physical examination noted synovitis of the hands and wrists without articular deformities with a marked mucocutaneous pallor. The biology revealed a microcytic anemia at 8 g/dl with stigmas of malabsorption (low cholesterol and hypocalcemia). No inflammatory syndrome was noted. Joint X-rays were without abnormalities. Immunological tests (anti-nuclear antibodies and rheumatoid factor) and thyroid function test were normal. Digestive fibroscopy with duodenal biopsies was done confirming the diagnosis of CD. Anti-gliadin, anti-reticulín and anti-endomysium antibodies were positive. Under the gluten-free diet the evolution was favorable with disappearance of the articular signs.

Comments and conclusion: Joint manifestations during CD are rare: frequency estimated at 0-26% depending on the series (Iqbal T 2013). The revealing forms are exceptional and can make a differential diagnosis with chronic inflammatory rheumatism (rheumatoid arthritis or juvenile arthritis) since the associations are described with CD (Lerner A 2015, Koning F 2015, De Maddi F 2013). CD deserves to be mentioned in front of arthralgia or unexplained arthritis of the elderly person even without any specific clinical symptomatology of this disease (Jericho H 2016, Vilppula A 2008).