Evaluation of the hypothesis that viral meningitis is a mimic of abusive head trauma

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Results

Background

• Viral meningitis (VM) has been proposed to mimic abusive head trauma (AHT)
• Comparing VM and AHT across presenting features will evaluate this theory
• Hypothesis: VM will differ significantly from AHT in historical and clinical presenting features
• Objectives: Compare VM to AHT proxy group across demographic, HPI and clinical domains.
  Compare both groups to SDH only

Objectives/Methods

• Retrospective, case-control study of subjects < 24 months old
• VM subjects: CSF positive for PeV, EV or HSV
• Subjects with CAP consultation had SDH identified by CT or MRI brain
• Concomitant suspicious injuries (CSIs) used to categorize SDH subjects into “AHT proxy” and “SDH only” groups

Results – Demographics Domain

• N = 397 VM subjects, 118 AHT proxy subjects and 35 SDH only subjects
• AHT and SDH only subjects were significantly older than VM subjects
• AHT subjects were more likely to be male, minority race and publicly insured than VM subjects

Results – History Domain

• Symptoms of neurologic compromise common in AHT and SDH only subjects
  AHT (OR 322.5 [121.0-859.3]) and SDH only subjects (OR 485.2 [63.8-3686.5]) were significantly more likely than VM subjects to have a history of no fever
• AHT and SDH only subjects were more likely to have vomiting than VM but less likely to have other ill symptoms

Results – Clinical Domain

• Higher odds of intubation (OR 62.4 [18.8-207.1]), witnessed seizure (OR 10.2 [3.9-26.8]) in AHT subjects compared to VM
• Significantly higher odds of intubation (OR 12.3 [2.4-63.5]) in SDH only subjects compared to VM
• VM subjects more likely than AHT and SDH only subjects to have a clinical fever
• SDH only subjects less likely to be intubated and have witnessed seizure than AHT

Conclusions

• Viral meningitis is not supported as a mimic of abusive head trauma
• AHT subjects are more ill appearing than VM
• SDH subjects are more similar to AHT subjects than VM subjects in historical features
• Certain combinations of features have a high PPV for abuse

Characteristics | VM, n (%) | AHT proxy, n (%) | SDH only, n (%) | OR AHT vs VM (95% CI) | OR SDH only vs VM (95% CI) | OR SDH only vs AHT (95% CI)
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Seizure | 9 (2.3) | 43 (36.4) | 5 (14.3) | 24.7 (11.6 - 52.8) | 7.2 (2.3 - 22.8) | 0.3 (0.1 - 0.8)
Mental status change | 5 (1.3) | 78 (66.1) | 16 (45.7) | 152.8 (58.5 - 399.7) | 66.0 (21.9 - 199.3) | 0.4 (0.2 - 0.9)
Decreased tone | 5 (1.3) | 20 (16.9) | 3 (8.6) | 16.0 (5.7 - 43.7) | 7.4 (1.7 - 32.2) | 0.5 (0.1 - 1.7)
Apnea | 4 (1.0) | 20 (16.9) | 5 (14.3) | 20.1 (6.7 - 60.0) | 16.4 (4.2 - 64.2) | 0.8 (0.3 - 2.6)
Difficulty breathing | 6 (1.5) | 31 (26.3) | 1 (2.9) | 23.2 (9.4 - 57.4) | 1.9 (0.2 - 16.4) | 0.1 (0.01 - 0.6)