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Case report

Intrathecal hematoma and arachnoiditis mimicking bacterial meningitis after an epidural blood patch

F. Roy-Gash, N. Engrand, E. Lecarpentier, M.P. Bonnet

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Title : Intrathecal hematoma and arachnoiditis mimicking bacterial meningitis after an epidural blood patch

Authors :

F. Roy-Gash Hôpital Cochin, 27, rue du Faubourg Saint Jacques 75014 Paris, France email : fabian.roy-gash@u-psud.fr

N. Engrand (corresponding author) Fondation Ophtalmologique Adolphe de Rothschild, 29, rue Manin 75019 Paris, France. email : nengrand@for.paris

E. Lecarpentier Hôpital Cochin, 27, rue du Faubourg Saint Jacques 75014 Paris, France email : edouard.lecarpentier@wanadoo.fr

MP. Bonnet Hôpital Cochin, 27, rue du Faubourg Saint Jacques 75014 Paris, France email : marie-pierre.bonnet@aphp.fr

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Abstract

We present a case of arachnoiditis and an intrathecal hematoma after an epidural blood patch. A 24-year-old parturient underwent an epidural blood patch three days after an accidental dural puncture during epidural labor analgesia. Four days later, the patient developed severe lower back pain, bilateral leg pain, persistent headache and fever. Bacterial meningitis was initially suspected and antibiotics started. Lumbar magnetic resonance imaging was performed and showed an intrathecal hematoma, with no blood in the epidural space. This report briefly reviews the few cases in the literature of arachnoiditis caused by an intrathecal hematoma and discusses the mechanism which resulted in blood in the subarachnoid space.

Introduction

Accidental dural puncture is a well-recognized complication of epidural analgesia, which can lead to post-dural puncture headache (PDPH). An epidural blood patch (EBP) is the most effective treatment for PDPH and has a low complication rate.^{1,2} However, some of the complications can be very severe, for example lumbar abscess, cauda equina syndrome or seizures.³⁻⁵ We report a case of a woman who developed arachnoiditis from an intrathecal hematoma after an EBP. The initial diagnosis was meningitis.

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