Foix-Chavany-Marie Syndrome Induced by a Unilateral Brain Abscess

Ryo Shoji1, Yu Kono1, Hiroto Furuhashi1, Masanori Nakano1 and Yuichi Torisu1

Abstract:
Foix-Chavany-Marie syndrome (FCMS), also known as anterior opercular syndrome, is a rare cortical type of pseudobulbar palsy characterized by the loss of voluntary control of the facial, pharyngeal, lingual, and masticatory muscles with preserved reflexive and autonomic functions. FCMS is generally associated with cerebrovascular diseases affecting the bilateral opercular regions. We herein report a case of FCMS induced by a unilateral brain abscess. The patient’s symptoms were resolved after treating the brain abscess. The present clinical results suggest that a unilateral brain abscess in the temporal operculum with a persistent old lesion in the contralateral insular cortex can induce FCMS.

Key words: anterior opercular syndrome, brain abscess, Foix-Chavany-Marie syndrome, pseudobulbar palsy, temporal operculum


Introduction
Foix-Chavany-Marie syndrome (FCMS), also known as anterior opercular syndrome, is a rare cortical type of pseudobulbar palsy characterized by the loss of voluntary control of the facial, pharyngeal, lingual, and masticatory muscles with preserved reflexive and autonomic functions (1, 2). FCMS is generally associated with cerebrovascular diseases affecting the bilateral opercular regions (3, 4). We herein report a case of FCMS induced by a unilateral brain abscess.

Case Report
An 84-year-old right-handed Japanese man presented to our department with weight loss because of an inability to consume food. He had a medical history of chronic hepatitis C and asthma with no medications. Two months earlier, the patient had been observed to have some difficulty speaking and swallowing. Thereafter, these symptoms gradually worsened, and his weight decreased from 42 kg to 31 kg within a 2-month period.

At admission, the results of a general physical examination were mostly normal, but a high fever (38.2 °C) and low body mass index (11.5 kg/m²) were noted. On a neurological examination, the patient was alert but had anarthria and severe dysphagia because of an inability to voluntarily move his lower face and masseter muscles. He could not voluntarily protrude his tongue either. In particular, his mouth was continuously half open and could not be closed when he was asked to do so. However, he was able to close his mouth when he spontaneously smiled and yawned. His writing and comprehension were preserved. In addition, he had no motor or sensory deficits in the extremities, and the tendon reflex was normal in all four limbs. Based on these neurological findings, the patient was diagnosed with FCMS.

Routine hematological tests showed that the patient had normocytic normochromic anemia with a hemoglobin level of 10.9 g/dL (reference range: 12.0-16.0 g/dL). Biochemical tests found that the C-reactive protein level was elevated, with a value of 3.77 mg/dL (reference range: <0.3 mg/dL), and the serum albumin level was decreased, with a value of 2.7 g/dL (reference range: 3.7-5.2 g/dL). His serum sample was found to be positive for hepatitis C virus. A radiographic examination and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the brain revealed old cerebral hemorrhaging in the right insular cortex, isolated sphenoid sinusitis, and a ring-
that the brain abscess had improved (Figure C). and swallow. Brain MRI on day 60 after drainage revealed improved. One week later, he regained his ability to speak caused by sequential infarcts to the bilateral anterior opercular and autonomic functions (1, 2). FCMS is most commonly ized by a loss of voluntary control of the facial, pharyngeal, lingual, and masticatory muscles with preserved reflexive and autonomic functions (1, 2). FCMS is most commonly caused by sequential infarcts to the bilateral anterior opercular or subcortical insular regions (3, 4) and less commonly by a unilateral opercular lesion (5-8). The exact functional mechanisms underlying this rare syndrome remain unclear.

In general, the prognosis of FCMS caused by the forma-
tion of bilateral opercular lesions tends to be poor, and most patients have persistent clinical deficits. In contrast, patients with FCMS caused by a unilateral opercular lesion have a relatively good prognosis (8). In the present case, the symp-
toms were resolved after treatment for the brain abscess, suggesting that the prognosis was relatively good. Therefore, based on the clinical findings in this case, we speculate that a newly arising unilateral brain abscess in the left temporal operculum with a persistent old lesion in the contralateral insular cortex results in bilateral opercular dysfunction, which is categorized as FCMS.

One limitation associated with our case report is that the mechanisms of FCMS remain elusive due to the insufficient performance of examinations used to examine the blood flow and metabolic functions of the brain, such as single-photon emission computed tomography and positron emission tomography. However, the present findings are crucial for delineating the mechanisms of FCMS.

In conclusion, we encountered a case of FCMS induced by a unilateral brain abscess. Further investigations are needed to clarify the mechanisms and pathogenesis of FCMS.

The authors state that they have no Conflict of Interest (COI).


The Internal Medicine is an Open Access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view the details of this license, please visit (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).