—Case Reports—

Graves’ Disease Associated with Alopecia Areata Developing after Hashimoto’s Thyroiditis

Mehmet Aşık1, Emine Binnetoğlu1, Hacer Şen1, Zeliha Tekeli1, Fatma Uysal1 and Kubilay Ukıncı1

1Department of Endocrinology, Faculty of Medicine, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey
2Department of Internal Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey
3Department of Radiology, Faculty of Medicine, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey

Abstract

Graves’ disease and Hashimoto’s thyroiditis are the most common autoimmune thyroid diseases. Hypothyroidism can develop in patients with Graves’ disease, either spontaneously or as a result of radioactive iodine therapy or surgery. However, it is rare for patients with Hashimoto’s thyroiditis to subsequently develop Graves’ disease. We report a case of alopecia areata associated with Graves’ disease in a 41-year-old woman who had previously been diagnosed with Hashimoto’s disease. Alopecia areata is an autoimmune disease associated with other autoimmune diseases such as thyroid disorders, anemia, and other skin disorders.

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Key words: alopecia areata, Graves’ disease, Hashimoto’s thyroiditis

Introduction

Autoimmune thyroid diseases are characterized by lymphocytic infiltration of the thyroid gland. The most common autoimmune thyroid diseases are Graves’ disease and Hashimoto’s thyroiditis. In patients with Graves’ disease hypothyroidism can develop spontaneously or as a result of medical treatment, such as radioactive iodine therapy or surgery. However Graves’ disease rarely develops after Hashimoto’s thyroiditis. Alopecia areata (AA), which is characterized by hair loss without scarring, is most often associated with other autoimmune diseases, such as thyroid disorders, anemias, and other skin disorders with autoimmune etiology (Champion et al.1, Takasu et al.1, Yamasaki et al.). We present a 41-years-old woman with AA associated with Graves’ disease who was previously found to have Hashimoto’s thyroiditis.

Case Report

A 41-year-old woman was referred to our clinic 6 years ago because of weight gain, constipation, weakness and somnolence. Results of laboratory studies were as follows: thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) 7.95 IU/mL (normal range: 0.2-4.2 IU/mL), free-T4 0.97 pmol/L (normal range 0.9-1.7 pmol/L), anti-thyroid peroxidase (TPO): 551 IU/mL (0-34 IU/mL), anti-thyroglobulin: 332 IU/mL (0-115 IU/mL). Ultrasonography of the thyroid demonstrated a...
diffuse hypoechoic pattern and a volume within the normal ranges (17 mm³). After Hashimoto’s thyroiditis was diagnosed, treatment with L-thyroxine (75 μg) was started and continued the same dose. Thyroid hormone levels were within normal limits for the subsequent 6 years. However 4 months ago, the patients was admitted to our clinic with complaints of diaphoresis, palpitations, discomfort, weight loss, trembling of the hands, and diarrhea. Furthermore the pulse rate was 115/beat per minute. The levels of thyroid hormones were as follows: TSH <0.005 IU/mL, free T3 17.01 pmol/L, free T4 4.33 pmol/L, anti-TPO: 381 IU/mL, antithyroglobulin : 84 IU/mL. Ultrasonography of the thyroid showed a diffuse hypoechoic pattern and a volume (8.78 mm³) less than that 6 years earlier. Treatment with L-thyroxine was stopped and propranolol was started. After 1 week, TSH was <0.005 IU/mL, free T3 was 14.34 pmol/L and free T4 was 4.06 pmol/L. Thyroid scintigraphy showed increased diffuse by increased uptake of radioactive iodine. Power Doppler ultrasonography r of the thyroid gland showed a pattern of thyroid infermo (Fig. 1). The level of TSH receptor antibodies was >50 U/L (0-10 U/L). Treatment was propylthiouracil was started. Also, AA was observed during this period (Fig. 2). Topical corticosteroids were applied. The AA improved with treatment and finally resolved completely after antithyroid treatment. The patient is still being followed up as an outpatient and being treated with antithyroid drugs.

Discussion

Graves’ disease and Hashimoto's have many common immunologic features. The underlying pathogenesis of these conditions have not been clarified. TSH receptor antibodies play an important role in the pathogenesis of Grave’s disease. Two types of TSH antibody have been defined in Graves’ disease stimulating TSH receptor antibodies (TSabs) and blocking TSH receptor antibodies (TBabs) (Morgenthaler et al.). In Graves’ disease, TSabs are dominant, but TBabs may also occur. Yamasaki et al. have demonstrated both TBabs and TSabs in a
Alopecia Areata with Graves' Disease

Although AA has been seen reported in concomitant Hashimoto's thyroiditis and Graves' disease, this case is, to our knowledge, the first of AA associated with Graves' disease developing after Hashimoto's thyroiditis.

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References

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