

Poster presentation

Brucellosis – forgotten but not gone

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Brucellosis, a zoonotic infection, is transmitted to children primarily by consumption of unpasteurized milk products. It can present with symptom complexes that mimic common chronic arthritis/connective tissue disorders, notably Still's disease. We describe three children (Table 1) suffering from brucellosis, seen in the last year in our rheumatology services.

These cases reemphasize the need for pattern recognition in rheumatologic disease. All three were referred by primary care physicians with a working diagnosis of systemic onset JIA/autoimmune disorder. However the lack of a "perfect fit" for such diagnoses, (pattern of fever, absence of rash/serositis, normal white cell/platelet counts) led us to explore a history of travel/residence in endemic areas and ingestion of unpasteurized milk. A family history of similarly afflicted members in one case was also relevant.

Serology is helpful but false positives may occur in hypergammaglobulinemic states. Blood cultures take weeks and the organism is a fastidious one. All three children responded well to a combination of streptomycin (2 weeks) and doxycycline (6 weeks).

Table 1:

Age (yrs)/Sex	9/F	16/M	11/M
Fever (weeks)	2	16	6
Musculoskeletal complaints	Cervical spine	Elbow knee hip ankle	Myalgia Calf pain
Other features	Cervical nodes	-	Cervical nodes Hepatomegaly
Endemic area	Travel	Resident	Resident
Unpasteurized milk ingestion	+	+	+
Family history	-	-	Mother and sib
WBC cumm/ESR mm/hr	8300/109	5900/50	7460/50
Sonography	Splenic abscesses	-	Mesenteric, paraaortic nodes
Serology	IgM +	IgM +	IgM and IgG +
Blood culture	Negative	Negative	Negative

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