A Rare Presentation of Gradenigo’s Syndrome

Nilam U. Sathe, MBBS, MS ENT∗, Dharmishtha R. Kaku, MBBS, MS ENT, DNB ENT†, Anjali Taku, MBBS, MS ENT‡, Muniram Pawara, MBBS, MS ENT§ and Vani K. Gupta, MBBS, MS ENT, DNB ENT¶

∗Associate Professor, Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Seth G. S. Medical College and KEM Hospital, Mumbai, India
†Fellow in Otology, Department of ENT and Head and Neck Surgery, Seth G. S. Medical College and KEM Hospital, Mumbai, India
‡Senior Resident, Department of ENT and Head and Neck Surgery, Seth G. S. Medical College and KEM Hospital, Mumbai, India

*Corresponding author: Dr. Nilam U. Sathe, MBBS, MS ENT, Associate Professor, Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Seth G. S. Medical College and KEM Hospital, Achary Parel, Mumbai - 400012, India, Tel: +91-9821309298

Abstract
Gradenigo’s syndrome is a characteristic triad of suppurative otitis media, pain in distribution of trigeminal nerve and abducens nerve palsy. Early diagnosis and management of Gradenigo’s syndrome is important as it can give rise to fatal complications. Careful clinical history and physical examination, neuroimaging are needed for a differential diagnosis.

We present a case report of unusual presentation and etiological cause of Gradenigo’s syndrome and its effective management. Patient was managed with prolong antibiotic followed by cortical mastoidectomy for histopathology. The patient responded to prolong antibiotic treatment for 3 weeks after which the lateral rectus palsy completely recovered.

Tuberculosis petrositis has similar presentation like Gradenigo’s syndrome and it can be effectively managed with medical line of management avoiding major surgery. Surgery is only required for histopathology for establishing the diagnosis and in resistant and extensive cases where disease clearance is needed.

Keywords
Gradenigo syndrome, Abducens nerve diseases, Otitis media, Tuberculosis, Petrositis

Case Report
A 57-year-old male presented with diplopia on left lateral gaze (Figure 1) along with left sided hemicranial headache and reduced sensation on left half of face, since 1 month. There was past history of left ear infection 1 year back which resolved with medications. On ENT examination bilateral tympanic membrane was intact. There was no mastoid tenderness, tunning fork

Introduction
The syndrome was first by Guiseppe Gradenigo in year 1907 [1]. Before the discovery of antibiotics, it was an uncommon complication, seen due to acute otitis media (AOM) and mastoiditis. The sixth cranial nerve and the trigeminal ganglion are in closely separated by the dura mater at the petrous apex of the temporal bone. The infection spreads to this area and gives rise to the characteristic triad of symptoms. Extradural inflammation secondary to apical petrositis can affect the sixth nerve by inflammation as it passes through the Dorello’s canal under the petroclinoid ligament. The infection can spread further giving rise to further complications like meningitis, intracranial abscess, spread to skull base and involvement of IX, X, XI cranial nerves (Vernet’s syndrome), prevertebral/parapharyngeal abscess or spread to sympathetic plexus around carotid sheath [2].

We present a case report of unusual presentation and etiological cause of Gradenigo’s syndrome and its effective management.

Citation: Sathe NU, Kaku DR, Taku A, Pawara M, Gupta VK (2020) A Rare Presentation of Gradenigo’s Syndrome. J Otolaryngol Rhinol 6:091. doi.org/10.23937/2572-4193.1510091
Accepted: November 03, 2020; Published: November 05, 2020

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or wall of external auditory canal with intact tympanic membrane (Figure 3). The granulations were cleared and sent for histopathology and Genexpert. The defect in the external auditory canal wall was closed with a cartilage. Histopathology was suggestive of chronic inflammatory granulations and Genexpert was negative for tuberculosis. Since clinically pale, avascular granulations are a feature of tuberculosis and patient had responded to Tab. Ciprofloxacin, empirical treatment with ciprofloxacin was continued for 3 weeks after which the lateral rectus palsy completely recovered (Figure 4).

Discussion

This case highlights some important points:

First, clinical features in Gradenigo Syndrome are variable. In Gradenigo’s original series of 57 patients, less than 50% presented with the complete triad. In other case series, involvements of the seventh and eighth cranial nerves were described [3]. The pneumatisation of the mastoid cells of the temporal bone is universal world over but it varies at the petrous apex. Only one third of adult population show petrous apex pneumatisation. In such cases it can provide a pathway for AOM to spread medially causing apical petrositis [4]. In ad-

Figure 1: Pretreatment photo showing left lateral rectus palsy.

Figure 2: HRCT temporal bone showing complete haziness of left mastoid air cells with destruction of sinus and dural plate and extension up to petrous apex.
be misdiagnosed as a tumor [10]. Similar scenario was seen in our case where patient had only involvement of trigeminal and abducens nerve without any otorrhoea or signs and symptoms suggestive of tuberculosis. Tuberculosis being endemic in our country, empirical antibiotic treatment with tablet ciprofloxacin was started for this patient to which the patient responded. Intraoperative findings were also in favor of tuberculosis, hence tablet ciprofloxacin was continued in the postoperative period for 3 weeks to which patient responded completely. It was stopped only after the Genexpert and histopathology report came negative for tuberculosis.

**Conclusion**

Gradenigo’s syndrome is a rare and life-threatening complication. It is seen that the full triad of symptoms may not always be present. The etiological cause for it must be found by proper imaging and accordingly it must be effectively treated with long duration antibiotic coverage. Tuberculosis petrosis has similar presentation and it can be effectively managed with medical line of management avoiding major surgery. Surgery is only required for histopathology for establishing the diagnosis and in resistant and extensive cases where disease clearance is needed.

**Conflicts of Interest**

None.

**Declarations of Interest**

None.
Financial Disclosure

None.

Funding

None.

Consent

Written and Informed consent was taken from the patient for the surgery and for using the clinical photographs.

References