Case Reports and Technical Notes

Spontaneous Cure of Intracavernous Aneurysm of the Internal Carotid Artery in a 14-Month-Old Child

Case Report

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The incidence of intracranial aneurysms in the general population is estimated to be less than 2%. Aneurysms occurring below the age of 20 years are quite uncommon. McDonald and Korb in their collected series of 1125 intracranial aneurysms, noted that the youngest patient was 13 years old. They had only 28 patients younger than 15 years of age. Similarly, Taveras and Wood found only four cases of intracranial aneurysms in patients under 15 years of age at the New York Neurological Institute during a period of 14 years. Only a few cases of aneurysms in early childhood have been reported. The intracavernous aneurysms account for about 3% of all intracranial aneurysms.

In a country where the incidence of aneurysms is considered to be low, the occurrence of an intracavernous aneurysm of the internal carotid artery in a child aged 14 months is certainly a curiosity. Apparently the spontaneous cure of an aneurysm of the internal carotid artery in a young child has not been reported.

Case Report

This 14-month-old boy was admitted to the Neurological Service of Christian Medical College Hospital, Vellore, on July 15, 1966. The child had been well until July 1, 1966, when he developed a high fever that lasted for 1 week. He was not unconscious during this period. A week after the onset of fever, his parents noticed swelling of the left eye and the eye lids. He then developed frequent left-sided seizures, with residual weakness on that side and swelling of the left eye.

Examination. The child appeared ill, irritable, and apprehensive. There was edema of eye lids, chemosis of the conjunctiva, and restriction of all ocular movements on the left side. There was no papilledema. There was a paresis of the entire left side including the face. Lumbar puncture and examination of cerebrospinal fluid revealed 6 cells/cu mm; protein was 25 mg% and sugar 50 mg%. An electroencephalogram obtained during sleep showed symmetrical slow waves of 1–2 cps over both hemispheres and an 8–12 cps activity superimposed on the slow waves. A left carotid angiogram (Fig. 1) revealed a large saccular aneurysm in the intracavernous part of the internal carotid artery, a faint outline of middle and anterior cerebral arteries, and marked orbital anastomosis between the internal carotid and external carotid arterial systems.

No definitive treatment was given as the parents were unwilling for an operation, and the child was discharged on August 5, 1966. During the follow-up it was noticed that the proptosis disappeared and the weakness on the left side improved.

Second Examination. The child was readmitted on May 14, 1968, at our request. He appeared well. There was no evidence of papilledema, and ocular movements were normal. No bruit was heard over the left eye. A repeat EEG was normal. The left-sided weakness was still present. A left carotid angiogram done under anesthesia showed complete obliteration of the previous saccular aneurysm, better filling of intracranial vessels, and evidence of internal and external carotid anastomosis (Figs. 2 and 3). Submentovertical view showed the connection between the external carotid arterial systems. Retrograde axillary catheterization and study of the vertebrobasilar system revealed significantly large vertebral and basilar and posterior communicating arteries (Fig. 4).

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Discussion

With fever and subsequent ophthalmoplegia as the main symptoms, a diagnosis of infective cavernous sinus thrombosis was considered as well as the possibility of multiple abscesses. Demonstration of an aneurysm of the intracavernous portion of the internal carotid artery by the left carotid angiogram (Fig. 1) was the surprising finding. Matson in his report of 13 cases of aneurysms in children below the age of 15 years had four