Infection of a total hip arthroplasty due to Gemella morbillorum

Sr. Editor: Infections are serious complications of the hip arthroplasty and may require removal of the prosthesis to stop the course of the disease and may require removal of the prosthesis. Late infections seem to be acquired by hematogenous spread from a distant infection or by inoculation of bacteria during a dental procedure with a high incidence of transient bacteraemia. Late infections of total joint prostheses are a major problem and the concern for prevention is the same as for early infections.

There was no proof that the infection in our patient was metastatic from the natural site of infection. The mouth is a recognised focus of infection, and only in a few cases, a dental procedure was identified as the route of infection. The bacteria Gemella morbillorum has not been reported as a cause of infection of hip arthroplasty. Gemella morbillorum is a Gram-positive cocci that grows very poorly, often after 48 hours of incubation and resembles viridans streptococci. In many cases, it is necessary to use molecular techniques to identify it. Gemella morbillorum has been associated with arthritis in natural13 and, in one case, in a prosthetic joint. Although it is rarely associated with human infections, it should not be underestimated, mainly in patients with underlying conditions, that develop periodontal and oropharyngeal events. There was no proof that the infection in our patient was metastatic from the mouth, but the sequence of events suggested that it was. The antibiotic prophylaxis should be considered in the patients with joint arthroplasties undergoing dental procedures with a high incidence of transient bacteriaemia. Late infections of prosthetic joint are often presented as a worsening pain, without fever or leukocytosis, so they are difficult to diagnose. In order to properly isolate them, the time of incubation of the fluid joint cultures should be increased. This organism should be included in the list of pathogens causing an infection of an arthroplasty.

References