ACUTE HEMATOGENOUS OM OF THE DISTAL FEMUR IN A TEENAGER WITH THALASSEMIA

Abilash Kumar[1],Imma Isniza Ismail[2],Fahrudin Che Hamzah[1]

[1]Hospital Pengajar Universiti Putra Malaysia, [2]Universiti Putra Malaysia

Introduction: Osteomyelitis (OM) is a debilitating disease especially in children requiring prompt diagnosis and treatment to diminish the risk of sequelae. In children, haematogenous OM primarily affects the most vascularised section of the growing skeleton. The commonest bone involved in acute haematogenous OM is the femur. The infection seeds in the metaphyseal region of the long bones (commonly affected are the femur and tibia) where the blood flow is rich although sluggish. Children with impaired immune function and haemoglobinopathies are at an increased risk of contracting OM. A high index of suspicion is vital and awareness of the evolving epidemiology and emergence of antibiotic resistance with recalcitrant strains require meticulous monitoring and targeted therapy.

Discussion: The present case report describes a 13-year-old boy with Thalassemia diagnosed with acute haematogenous OM of the distal femur after sustaining a fall with trauma to the back. Initial physical assessment revealed a septic looking patient with a flexed and swollen left knee. Prompt surgical drainage and prolonged targeted antibiotic therapy was key in eradicating his infection.

Conclusion: We review the literature of mainstay surgical debridement treatment of acute OM, discuss the treatment modules of targeted antibiotic therapy and highlight the similarity in presentation to vaso-occlusive crisis in children. These patients will often require a multimodality team approach involving orthopaedics and paediatrics.