

Case report: Who let the dogs out? A rare presentation of paralytic rabies

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INTRODUCTION:

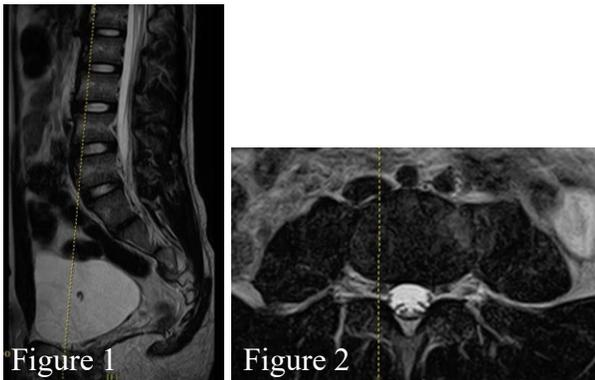
Rabies is caused by Rabies Lyssavirus and continues to be an epidemic in Sarawak since its first reported case in 2017². The main mode of transmission is via bites from rabid animals, though a small percentage of transmission from scratches and abrasions have been reported as well³.

REPORT:

A 16 year old boy presented with lower back pain with right lower limb radiculopathy associated with bilateral lower limb numbness and urinary and bowel incontinence after a fall in sitting position a week prior to admission.

Clinical examination showed reduced sensation below L1 over the right side with hypotonia and hyporeflexia. Anal tone was lax and bulbocavernosus reflex was absent. Radiographs showed loss of lumbar lordosis. MRI spine showed features of plexopathy of L3-S2 exiting nerve roots.

Figure 1, 2: T2-weighted MRI images showing perineural enhancement suggestive of lumbosacral plexopathy



Patient subsequently developed seizures with opisthotonus and hypersalivation. He did not respond to antiepileptics and required ventilatory support.

Urine and saliva PCR test was positive for rabies. Patient succumbed to the disease on day 10 of admission.

Rabies can present in two forms, the more common furious rabies while 20-30% presents with paralytic rabies². Paralytic rabies resembles Gullian-Barre syndrome, with urinary incontinence being more common in rabies.² There is no literature reporting cauda equina syndrome(CES) in paralytic rabies, though diverse central nervous system involvements have been described.² Post-exposure vaccination is required to prevent disease progression with no curative treatment.²

CONCLUSION:

Fatality rate of rabies is high² and establishing early diagnosis remains challenging. It can be considered as an etiology for non-traumatic CES in epidemic areas.

REFERENCES:

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2. Chacko K et al.,Diagnostic difficulties in human rabies:A case report and review of the literature. Qatar Med J. 2017 Apr 21;2016(2):15.