

Period Pains and Epipens: A case study on Catamenial Anaphylaxis



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Abstract

Catamenial or cyclical anaphylaxis is a complex and rare clinical syndrome. It features recurrent episodes of multi-system allergic reactions occurring at the time of menstruation. This allergic phenomenon is thought to be caused by hypersensitivity to progesterone or prostaglandins. However, due to a paucity of reported cases, its exact mechanism remains unclear. This poses challenges for the optimal management and control of patients living with this life-threatening disease.

We present the case of a 18 year old female who presented to the Emergency Department with facial itch, throat tightness and respiratory wheeze. These allergic symptoms occurred within 1 hour of breakthrough vaginal bleeding. She was managed with 8 doses of IM adrenaline, IV hydrocortisone and nebulised adrenaline, and was monitored in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) overnight. This occurred on a background of 8 previous episodes of catamenial anaphylaxis in the past 2 years, all requiring admission to the ICU for adrenaline infusions. Prior to this admission, the patient was managed with Primolut 5mg daily and Morimin 1mg/35mcg daily, with no breakthrough bleeding or anaphylactic symptoms for the past 3 months. The patient's Primolut was increased to 10mg daily, and she was commenced on regular anti-histamines and given an anaphylaxis plan. At three-month follow-up she had had no further bleeding or anaphylaxis symptoms. If breakthrough bleeding on the current regime occurs, alternative management options may include Depot Medroxyprogesterone Acetate or an injectable Gonadotropin Releasing Hormone Agonist.

Biography

Tarini Paul completed her Doctor of Medicine from the University of Melbourne in 2018. She is currently working as an Obstetrics and Gynaecology Resident at the Mercy Hospital for Women, Melbourne. She has conducted research with the Translational Obstetrics Group at the Mercy and is currently the Vice-President of the Australian Medical Association's, Women in Medicine Group.

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Session name/ number:
Category: Poster presentation