THE FIRST REPORTED CASE OF MYCETOMA CAUSED BY
STREPTOMYCES SOMALIENSIS IN MALAYSIA

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INTRODUCTION

Mycetoma, a chronic granulomatous infection, is caused by two large groups of microorganisms: the eumycetes and the actinomycetes. The infection is fairly common in India but in Malaysia only two cases of mycetoma caused by the eumycetes have been reported. This is the first reported case of mycetoma due to Streptomyces somaliensis in Malaysia.

CASE REPORT

The patient, a 64-year-old Indian woman, was involved in a road accident six years ago. She sustained severe injury to the lateral aspect of the right leg. Six months ago there was swelling over the right knee and thigh with breakdown and multiple sites of pus discharge (Fig. 1). She was not able to walk because of pain in the right knee. The knee was swollen with synovial thickening and a fixed flexion deformity of 30° with no movement possible because of pain. There was involvement of the right knee joint, cystic lesions in the condyles of the femur and tibia. Sulphur granules were seen extruding from the sinuses.

Microbiology

Pus was taken from the discharging sinus and inoculated on to SDA media in duplicate. One specimen was incubated at 37°C aerobically and the other at 37°C anaerobically. The anaerobic medium showed no growth but aerobic culture was positive. Colonies were slow growing.
creamy in colour, leathery and folded (Fig. 2). Gram staining of the organism showed gram positive filamentous rod forms without fragmentation (Fig. 3). Casein and tyrosine hydrolysis was positive.

**HISTOPATHOLOGY**

A skin biopsy taken adjacent to one of the sinuses (Fig. 4) showed infiltration by polymorphs, plasma cells and haemosiderin laden macrophages. There were microabscesses scattered throughout. Special stains for fungus were negative.
TREATMENT AND PROGRESS

There was good response to treatment with trimethoprim with sulphamethoxazole followed by 2,500 rads of superficial radiotherapy (Fig. 5). She underwent an arthrodesis of the knee joint. She is able to walk now and the sinuses have healed.

DISCUSSION

Mycetoma is primarily a disease of the tropics and subtropics. It has been described as a disease with a single clinical entity and multiple aetiology. Both the eumycetoma and actinomycetoma have been well documented in India, Africa and Indonesia. This is the first reported case of actinomycetoma caused by *Streptomyces somaliensis* in Malaysia. The infection was confirmed histologically and by culture. Response of this patient to treatment with antibiotics was poor. However after additional treatment with radiotherapy there was a remarkable improvement with healing of the sinuses. Knee joint involvement could only be eradicated by a more radical excision with knee arthrodesis.

REFERENCES


OBITUARY NOTICE

We announce with regret the death of Dr. Christopher Gresson of Christchurch, New Zealand, a foundation member and Fellow of The Australasian College of Dermatologists, on 8 June 1982. An appreciation will appear in the next issue.
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