PAPILLARY THYROID CARCINOMA IN A LACTATING MOTHER

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ABSTRACT

Radioiodine ablation of post-thyroidectomy remnant was delayed successfully in a lactating mother suffering from papillary carcinoma of thyroid gland. However, daily dose of thyroxine (100 micrograms per day) was enough to suppress her cancer for many months as shown in the case reported below documented by clinical followups and whole body scans.

KEY WORDS: Iodine-131 therapy, thyroid cancer, lactation.

INTRODUCTION

The ideal treatment of papillary thyroid carcinoma is surgery followed by I-131 ablation and daily thyroxine thyrapy. It is well-known that radioiodine administered to lactating woman will appear in the milk and may be harmful to the baby. Radioiodine ablation was delayed in a lactating mother who had a near-total thyroidectomy for papillary carcinoma of thyroid.

CASE REPORT

A 32-years-old woman with long-standing multinodular goitre and biopsy-proven papillary carcinoma of the thyroid gland who had a near-total thyroidectomy on 07 Oct. 2002 came for remnant ablation by I-131 therapy.

The patient was still breast-feeding her thirteen-month-old baby. As papillary cancer is slow-growing and breast-feeding is important up to two years, we advised her to start thyroxine 100 micrograms daily in empty stomach and to come after eleven months for radioiodine ablation. The patient lived in Bhurungamari (Kurigram), and could not procure thyroxine tablets regularly-she stopped it on 23 Oct. 2002 and restarted it on 17 Nov. 2002. She was clinically well and did not come to us. On 10 April 2005, she came to our centre and we gave her 10 mCi of I-131. A 24 hour whole body scan showed most of the radioiodine concentrated in the thyroid region. She is on thyroxine therapy and long-term followup is being done.

DISCUSSION

Report on the excretion of radioiodine in human breast milk have appeared since 1952.[1-4] Rubow and Klopper treated a lactating mother with papillary thyroid cancer and concluded that it might be necessary to suppress lactation completely before I-131 is administered in order to obtain the therapeutic effect reguired.

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