

CHEMICAL PERITONITIS DUE TO "FETEX PASTE"

by

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Introduction

Number of methods are in vogue for induction of abortion today. However, none of them is completely safe. Use of "Fetex paste", a commercial product, widely advertised in lay press and even in the medical journals, is one such method.

The present article illustrates the complications of this method in a case and findings of animal experimental study carried out to know about the effects of "Fetex paste" on the female reproductive system.

CASE NOTES

S.M.B., a female, aged 18 years was admitted to the Civil Hospital Belgaum, on 20th July 1979 with complaints of severe abdominal pain, vomiting and distension of abdomen for the last 24 hours. She also gave history of amenorrhoea of 5 months. On enquiry, she admitted that she had consulted a medical practitioner for termination of suspected pregnancy and the doctor had tried to induce abortion by introducing "Fetex paste" into the uterus two days prior to the present condition.

On examination, the patient was pale, toxic, dehydrated with a low volume pulse, 104/min.

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Systolic blood pressure was 80 mm of mercury, while diastolic was not recordable. Respiratory rate was 36/min. But for tachycardia and tachypnoea no other abnormality was noted in the examination of cardiovascular and respiratory systems. On abdominal examination classical features of acute peritonitis were present. The following investigations were carried out.

Hb 34%; T.C. 8,200 cells/c.mm.; D.C. Poly 70%; lymphocytes 23%; eosinophils 5%; monocytes 2%.

Blood urea 30 mg.%. Blood Group 'A' Rh. positive.

Urine: N.A.D.

She was put on conservative line of treatment. But her general condition continued to deteriorate. Hence, a laparotomy was undertaken.

Laparotomy findings

The peritonium was congested. The peritoneal cavity was filled with haemorrhagic fluid. The uterus was normal in size with a large patch of subserosal haemorrhagic area in the anterior wall. Both the tubes were severely congested and oedematous. The tubes showed perforations with a pasty material leaking out. The left ovary was normal in size, though congested and inflamed. There was an ovarian cyst on the right side, measuring 15 cms in diameter. The cyst also showed signs of inflammation.

Right sided ovariectomy and salpingectomy was carried out because the salpinx was adherent to the ovarian cyst. The abdomen was closed after giving peritoneal toilet. The specimen was sent for histopathological examination and the exudate for microbiological examination. Her post operative period was uneventful.

The Histopathology Report

Sections from fallopian tubes showed complete necrosis of the mucosal layers. The muscle wall and serosa showed intense infiltration with acute inflammatory cells. The muscle coat was found necrosed at places. The lumen was filled with brownish granular material along with the purulent exudate.

Sections from the ovarian cyst showed the features of benign cystic teratoma. The serosal surface showed acute inflammatory cells.

Culture Report

No micro-organisms could be grown in culture.

Since the findings in the case suggested a corrosive action of the paste on the tissues an experimental model was designed to verify the clinical observations.

Animal Experimental Study

Two groups, each consisting of 4 healthy, young, female rabbits weighing between 1.5 to 2 kgs were employed in the study.

The hair on the abdomen was shaved. The animals were anaesthetized with ether and the abdomen was opened in layers with all aseptic precautions.

Into the uterine cavity and horns of test animals 0.5 ml of 'Fetex paste' (Batch No. 815056) was injected with the help of 22 SW G hypodermic needle. To prevent leakage of the paste through the puncture, a valvular puncture was effected.

The control group animals received 0.5 ml of sterile petroleum jelly in the same manner. The abdomen was closed in layers.

Two animals of each group were sacrificed after 24 hours and the remaining ones after 48 hours. The abdomen was reopened to observe the changes.

Changes in the Test Group Sacrificed After 24 Hours:

The peritonium in general appeared normal except for the serosa around the uterus and

tubes where a severe congestion, haemorrhage and necrosis were noted. There was no leak from the site of needle puncture. The uterus and tubes were friable.

Changes in Test Group Sacrificed After 48 Hours

The congestion, haemorrhage and necrosis were more severe than in those test animals sacrificed after 24 hours. In both of these animals, the paste was found leaking through the uterine wall (away from the injection site) there was a pocket of pus formation between the urinary bladder and uterus.

Histological examination of the tubes and the uterus in the test animals revealed severe necrosis of endometrium and mucosa of the tubes. Irregular areas of muscle necrosis were noted. Pockets of paste was found in the myometrium. There was dense infiltration of polymorphonuclear leucocytes.

Changes in the Control Group

No inflammatory changes either by gross examination or by histology were noted.

The exudate from the uterus and tubes were collected for microbiological examination. However, no organisms were isolated from any of these samples.

Summary

Chemical peritonitis caused by introduction of 'Fetex paste' is reported. To prove the corrosive action of the paste, an animal model was planned and the action of 'Fetex paste' demonstrated.

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