

Letter to the editors

Blurring of vision due to ifosfamide

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Sirs,

Blurring of vision has previously been described as a complication of cyclophosphamide therapy [1]. It has not, however, been described as occurring with ifosfamide, which is an alkylating oxazaphosphorine similar to cyclophosphamide. We would like to describe the case of a child who developed marked blurring of vision probably as a complication of ifosfamide therapy.

An 8-year-old Caucasian girl was referred with an initial diagnosis of Ewing's sarcoma of the right tibia. She received i. v. vincristine, doxorubicin, ifosfamide (3 g/m² per day) and mesna. The last two drugs were given as continuous infusions. During the 3rd day of treatment, she developed marked blurring of vision in both eyes with florid conjunctivitis. There were no other abnormal findings at the time. Both the blurred vision and the conjunctivitis lasted for several hours and settled with the end of the infusion of ifosfamide. The other medications received during her stay in hospital consisted of the antiemetics haloperidol, lorazepam and dexamethasone. Her histology has since been reviewed, and since it was felt that a diagnosis of osteogenic sarcoma was more likely than that of Ewing's sarcoma, her treatment has been changed to epirubicin and cisplatin.

It appears highly likely that the blurring of the vision and the conjunctivitis were associated with the ifosfamide.

Ifosfamide differs chemically from cyclophosphamide in the position of one chloroethyl group only. Although doxorubicin has been reported to cause conjunctivitis, no recurrence has occurred with epirubicin. Vincristine can cause blurred vision, but does not appear to cause conjunctivitis. None of the other drugs have been reported to cause any acute visual problems. We know of no reports in the literature or reports to the manufacturer of blurred vision occurring with ifosfamide.

The previously reported cases associated with cyclophosphamide all resolved spontaneously. No reddening of the eyes was noted in any of these five patients. In three of the five, symptoms occurred within 2 days of therapy, which is a similar period to that in the case described here, and also symptoms resolved within 1 h. It is of interest that in the five previously reported cases and in this case the subjects were all female. The significance of this remains unclear, however.

Reference

1. Kende G, Sirkin SR, Thomas PRM, Freeman AI (1979) Blurring of vision. A previously undescribed complication of cyclophosphamide therapy. *Cancer* 44: 69–71

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