

A PECULIAR CASE OF CENTIPEDE ENVENOMATION CAUSING NEUROLOGICAL DEFICITS: A CASE REPORT

Muhammad Najmi Ab Ghani¹, Collin Looi Seng Kim²

¹Serdang Hospital, ²Universiti Putra Malaysia

Introduction: Centipedes are venomous tropical arthropods. Their bites commonly cause localized skin reactions; however, neurological deficits are rarely reported.

Discussion: An 11-year old Malay girl complained of pain at the lateral aspect of her left proximal thigh, associated with numbness over the lower limb. She noted that she had been bitten by a centipede at her left thigh. Clinically, she was able to ambulate normally, however, there was a bite mark with surrounding redness over the lateral aspect of her left proximal thigh. Compartments of the left thigh were soft but tenderness at the bite site was felt. Joints of the left lower limb were supple. Motor power was MRC grade 4 associated with sensory deficit from L5 to S1. Distal pulses were palpable. Radiographs of the left femur and lumbosacral MRI were unremarkable. Patient was conservatively managed with analgesics and started on course of vitamin B complex. Physiotherapy was also commenced to strengthen the left lower limb muscles. Patient subsequently regained full neurological function at follow up at 3 months. Due to the usually benign course associated with arthropod bites and the lack of awareness regarding the potential effects of its venom, care of patients is usually overlooked. This results in an under-reporting of cases as most are treated at home. Centipede bites commonly cause local reactions such as pain, tingling, numbness and paresthesia. Limitation in motion or weakness is rarely reported. Centipede venom contains substances (serotonin, histamine) that may affect the autonomic nervous system and potentially cause neurological deficits such as those seen in our patient.

Conclusion: Although centipede bites are commonly benign, potentially serious adverse reactions such as neurological deficits should always be considered.