

Limb Threatening Infection By *Vibrio Vulnificus* Mimicking Necrotizing Fasciitis

Faris MK, Tiew SK, Rifa AS, Kamil MK

Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Hospital Tengku Ampuan Rahimah, Jalan Langat 41200 Klang, Selangor, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION:

Vibrio vulnificus is a virulent aquatic opportunistic halophilic gram negative bacillus which may cause severe infection in susceptible human. It is an unusual cause of skin and soft tissue infection which may progress rapidly into fatal septicemia.

SUMMARY:

We report a case of 63 year-old health lorry driver, presented with one day history of worsening left forearm pain and swelling associated with fever and multiple episodes of vomiting. He gave a history of water activities when delivering goods to jungle a day prior.

At casualty, he appears alert with no respiratory distress. However, he is hypotensive which requires single inotropic support.

On examination, there is a hyperpigmented swelling over the dorsal aspect of left forearm with hemorrhagic bullae over the wrist. Forearm compartments are soft with no crepitation felt.

No gas shadow was noted on plain radiograph. Blood investigation shows leukocytosis with metabolic acidosis. As to rule out necrotizing fasciitis, probe test was performed which shows healthy underlying fascia and muscle layers.

Patient was initially treated as septic shock secondary to left forearm cellulitis and started on a broad spectrum antibiotic.

Few days later, blood and bullae aspirate sample grew *Vibrio vulnificus*, and antibiotic regime was changed accordingly. Despite treatment, his infection worsens with extension into left arm. In view of hemodynamic compromise, left above elbow amputation is performed for life-saving.



DISCUSSIONS:

One of *Vibrio vulnificus* presentation is rapidly progressive cellulitis. These patients may develop a blistering dermatitis sometimes mistaken for pemphigus or pemphigoid, and then septic shock, which might lead to death. Treatments vary from relatively noninvasive antibiotic therapy to life-saving amputation. Early diagnosis of *Vibrio vulnificus* is the key to reduce mortality and morbidity. It can be guided by detailed history and clinical findings especially skin changes with hemorrhagic bullae progressing into sepsis.

CONCLUSION:

An awareness of clinical manifestation of *Vibrio vulnificus* infection is important to provide prompt diagnosis and early aggressive treatment.

REFERENCES:

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