

Human seminal plasma allergy as a cause of postcoital asthma

A. Shah*, M.K. Agarwal**

It was with great interest that we recently read a report by Dr. Picado [1] in which a female patient developed severe postcoital asthma. We recently reported, for the first time from India, a patient who presented with postcoital wheezing dyspnoea caused by human seminal plasma allergy (HSPA) [2]. Our patient showed strong intradermal test reactions to the seminal plasma antigens prepared from her husband, and those from a healthy volunteer. Although the mechanisms of postcoital asthma appear different in both cases, sexual activity in some asthmatic patients may result in a life-threatening condition, especially in patients with HSPA who present with systemic manifestations [3-8]. However, it would have been interesting to know whether Dr Picado's patient would have experienced relief in her symptoms, even without prior prophylactic bronchodilator, with condom usage only.

Dr Picado correctly points out that clinical histories in asthmatic patients do not usually include the effect of sex on asthma. We would like to stress that postcoital asthma may easily be overlooked due to lack of physician awareness and patient embarrassment. Further studies on these aspects are warranted.

A Shah.

*Department of Clinical Research

**Department of Respiratory Allergy and Applied Immunology, Vallabhbhai Patel Chest Institute, University of Delhi, P.O.Box 2101, Delhi 110007, India.

References

1. Picado C. - Postcoital severe exacerbation of asthma requiring mechanical ventilation. *Eur J Respir Dis*, 1987, 71, 52-53.
2. Shah A, Sethi S, Agarwal MK. - Human seminal plasma allergy in India. *J Asthma*, 1988, 25, 137-140.
3. Halpern BN, Ky T, Robert B. - Clinical and immunological study of an exceptional case of reaginic type sensitization to human seminal fluid. *Immunology*, 1967, 12, 247-258.
4. Mikkelsen EJ, Henderson LL, Leiferman KM, Gleich GJ. - Allergy to human seminal fluid. *Ann Allergy*, 1975, 34, 239-243.
5. Reunala T, Koskimies AI, Bjorksten F, Janne J, Lassus A. - Immunoglobulin E-Mediated severe allergy to human seminal plasma. *Fertil Steril*, 1977, 28, 823-835.
6. Mathias CGT, Frick OL, Caldwell TM, Yunginger JW, Maibach HI. - Immediate hypersensitivity to seminal fluid and atopic dermatitis. *Arch Dermatol*, 1980, 116, 209-212.
7. Friedman SA, Bernstein IL, Enrione N, Marcus ZH. - Successful long-term immunotherapy for human seminal plasma anaphylaxis. *J Am Med Assoc*, 1984, 251, 2684-2687.
8. Blair H, Parish WE. - Asthma and urticaria induced by seminal plasma in a woman with IgE antibody and T-lymphocyte responsiveness to a seminal plasma antigen. *Clin Allergy*, 1985, 15, 117-130.