

Apathetic thyroid storm with resultant hypercalcaemic crisis: A rare presentation of a common condition

Dr Nai Chien Huan¹, Dr Hwee Ching Tee¹

¹*Labuan Hospital, Labuan, Malaysia*

Thyroid storm is a severe and life threatening form of thyrotoxicosis, characterized by features such as hyperthermia, arrhythmias, gastrointestinal disturbances and altered mental status. Rarely, patients can present in an apathetic form where 'negative' or 'passive' symptoms such as body weakness, lethargy and depression predominate, causing diagnostic challenges. In this case report, we present a 64 year old lady who presented to us with a 2 week history of lethargy, generalized body weakness, fever, cough and decreased mentation. On examination, she appeared lethargic and ill with tachycardia (130 beats per minute). Other physical examination were largely unremarkable. Further investigation excluded structural intracranial lesions but her laboratory findings were consistent with thyroid storm (TSH <0.005 mIU/L; free T4 >100.0pmol/L) and hypercalcaemic crisis (corrected serum calcium 4.02mmol/L). Her hypercalcaemic crisis was initially managed with pamidronate which unfortunately caused transient hypocalcaemia necessitating both oral and intravenous calcium supplements. Her thyroid storm was treated with hydrocortisone, Lugol's iodine, anti-thyroid medications together with other supportive measures with marked clinical improvement and normalization of laboratory indices. Further tests such as tumour markers and computed tomography (CT) scan were negative for malignancy and her intact parathyroid hormone (iPTH) level is normal at 21pg/mL. Concomitant apathetic thyroid storm and hypercalcaemic crisis is a rare manifestation of thyrotoxicosis, a rather common medical condition. Early recognition and prompt treatment is vital for a better patient outcome.