

IgE- mediated anaphylaxis and successful desensitization to Pertuzumab: a first case with positive skin test

Anafilaksja mediowana mechanizmem IgE-zależnym i desensytyzacja Pertuzumabem: pierwszy przypadek z dodatnimi testami skórnymi

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Summary

IgE-related hypersensitivity reactions (HSRs) to pertuzumab may occur and limit their practicality. Pertuzumab related infusion reactions are not surprising, but HSRs are less common. We report a 58-year-old female with the diagnosis of metastatic breast cancer. She experienced itching, pruritus, flushing, sweating, tachycardia, chest tightness and collapse within 2-3 minutes of pertuzumab administration. Following positive skin test results with pertuzumab, she was successfully desensitized with rapid drug desensitization protocol, despite having a history of pertuzumab-induced Grade 3 anaphylaxis.

Keywords: *Pertuzumab, Anaphylaxis, Hypersensitivity, Drug desensitization, Skin tests*

Streszczenie

Podanie pertumuzabu niesie ze sobą ryzyko wystąpienia anafilaksji mediowanej mechanizmem IgE-zależnym, co ogranicza praktyczność stosowania leku. W pracy opisano przypadek 58-letniej kobiety z rozpoznaniem raka piersi z przerzutami. W ciągu 2-3 minut od podania pertumuzabu doświadczyła świądu, zaczerwienienia się, pocenia się, tachykardii, ucisku w klatce piersiowej i zapaści. Po pozytywnych wynikach testów skórnym z pertuzumabem pacjentka została skutecznie odczulona zgodnie z protokołem desensytyzacji pomimo wcześniejszego przebiecia anafilaksji 3-go stopnia wywołanej przez pertuzumab.

Słowa kluczowe: *pertuzumab, anafilaksja, nadwrażliwość, desensytyzacja, testy skórne*

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INTRODUCTION

Pertuzumab is a humanized monoclonal antibody (MoAb), successfully used for the treatment of human epidermal growth factor receptor-2 (HER2)-positive metastatic breast cancer in combination with trastuzumab and docetaxel [1]. Monoclonal antibodies, in general, can induce cytokine releases, but IgE-related hypersensitivity reactions (HSRs) may also occur and limit their practicality [2]. Rapid drug desensitization (RDD) was developed for the delivery of biologic agents that cause immediate HSRs by inducing temporary tolerance. However, desensitization protocols for MoAbs are seldom used [2]. We have been using RDD, as developed at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, for patients who experience immediate HSRs [2, 3].

Pertuzumab related infusion reactions are not surprising but HSRs are less common due to their lack of mouse antibody parts. In keeping with that very few immediate HSRs to pertuzumab and desensitization attempts have been reported [4, 5].

Here we report a patient who was skin test positive to pertuzumab, and could be successfully desensitized with RDD despite having a history of pertuzumab-induced Grade 3 anaphylaxis.

CASE DESCRIPTION

A 58-year-old female with the diagnosis of metastatic breast cancer was given four cycles of pertuzumab, trastuzumab and docetaxel in oncology department. The patient experienced itching, pruritus, flushing, sweating, tachycardia, chest tightness and collapse within 2-3 minutes of pertuzumab administration. The drug infusion was stopped immediately, and intramuscular pheniramine (45.5 mg) and intravenous methylprednisolone (40 mg) were administered. The patient developed the same symptoms during the subsequent infusion, and the infusion was stopped and patient was referred to the allergy department.

She had no history of atopic diseases and was negative to skin prick testing with inhalant allergens. Prick test with

reaction, the infusion was then interrupted and the patient treated accordingly, then infusion was restarted. A month later we modified the desensitization protocol with addition of step 11a with a infusion rate 50 cc/hour and increased dextroz 5 % infusion to 250 cc/hour at step 9 for the rest of desensitization (bold in Table I) The patient perfectly tolerated this protocol. She received 4 RDDs with two breakthrough reactions developed during the first two desensitizations, but no reaction occurred during third and fourth desensitization. The desensitization protocol is ongoing.

DISCUSSION

The data about HSR to pertuzumab are very limited and in keeping with that successful RDD to pertuzumab has been reported only in two references [4, 5]. An IgE-mediated HSR suggested by a positive basophile activation test and increased tryptase levels, was reported in a 38-year-old woman with breast cancer on her second infusion with pertuzumab. She was safely re-exposed to the drug through 4-bag 16-step protocol because of the severity of the initial reaction. Skin prick and IDT were negative in this case [5]. In the recent paper about HSRs to 16 MoAbs, there were two cases with HSRs to pertuzumab and only one was skin tested and resulted in negative [5].

Skin testing with the offending agent, specific serum IgE measurement along with elevated serum tryptase level during the acute reaction can be used for IgE-mediated

HSR [8]. We are not aware the presence of specific in vitro test for the measurement of IgE to pertuzumab. Instead we performed skin tests. Skin tests with MoAbs have not been standardized but as used in the recent article [5], we used 1:1, 1:10- 1: 1000 dilutions for prick and IDTs. To our knowledge, our case is the first with a positive IDT result to pertuzumab. Dose reduction is used to tolerize patients to their target dose when initial desensitizations are not successful [2, 7], We preferred to use half dose of the drug in the initial desensitization along with augmented premedication because of the severity of initial reaction. Despite that the patient reacted with grade 3 anaphylaxis during the first two desensitizations. Unfortunately a blood sample for tryptase levels was not taken during the reactions but we were able to manage the further desensitizations with modification of the protocol.

In conclusion pertuzumab can induce IgE-mediated anaphylaxis and can be successfully managed with RDD.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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