Mild trauma on an enlarged tuberculous spleen probably caused sudden death in a previously happy marriage

Wilson I. B. Onuigbo

Department of Pathology, Medical Foundation & Clinic, 8 Nsukka Lane, Enugu 400001, Nigeria

*Corresponding author: Wilson I. B. Onuigbo, Department of Pathology, Medical Foundation & Clinic, 8 Nsukka Lane, Enugu 400001, Nigeria.; Email: wilson.onuigbo@gmail.com

Citation: Wilson I. B. Onuigbo (2018) Mild trauma on an enlarged tuberculous spleen probably caused sudden death in a previously happy marriage.

Received: 14th February 2018 Accepted: 18th April 2018 Published: 27th June 2018

Copyright: © 2018 Wilson I. B. Onuigbo. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Abstract

The Police surgeon’s role in the investigation of sudden death is very important, especially as regards the evidence of family members. The present paper documents how morphological diagnosis threw light on the sudden death of a woman when the husband hit her on the abdomen although the family had hitherto been happy. Perhaps, the underlying illness triggered misunderstanding which brought on the fatality.

Key words: Police surgeon, sudden death, trauma, spleen, rupture, tuberculosis.
Introduction

A recent paper asked whether there was progress in the autopsy diagnosis of sudden death in adults and answered positively with the role of the Police surgeon. Therefore, this paper concerns the author’s such role in a case of family brawl that ended in a woman’s death.

Case Report

Happiness was the name of the girl who identified the body of her mother to me. There was the history of sudden death following a family brawl. On opening the abdomen, there was hemoperitoneum. The source was the enlarged spleen. Microscopy revealed the interesting mitigating presence of tuberculosis. In other words, manslaughter was the fitting exposition.

Discussion

Splenic tuberculosis was a surprise lesion in this setting. So was hemangiomatosis in a case of a 62-year-old male accountant who had a sudden collapse while returning from work.

Incidentally, the name of the witness in the local case was Happiness. Interestingly, among the Ibo or Igbo Ethnic Group, whose domain is in the South Eastern Region of Nigeria, there is an important “Naming Ceremony.” In particular, “The ceremony is observed with feasting and general rejoicing.” In fact, it is necessary to add that “circumstances, or prevailing conditions of the time, may suggest an appropriate name whereby the unusual happenings are kept in remembrance.”

I am persuaded that the cog in the wheel of happy matrimony in this pitiful case was the underlying tuberculosis together with splenomegaly. Incidentally, spleen friability also reared its ugly head as I reported elsewhere with regard to sports medicine.

Conclusion

This report has two prongs. First, the person who identified the body of her father was named Happiness thereby presuming that the parents’ marriage was in tune with her name! Secondly, the rupture and bleeding to death can be said to have been influenced by both splenomegaly and tuberculosis. The latter, which possibly constituted the cause of disagreement in the household, must have brought on doom instead of gloom expected in the marriage. Indeed, it can be said that a conclusion of this type goes a long way to counter a recent article considering the futility of forensic autopsy.

On the positive side, the experience of Barbados authors was to the effect that forensic autopsy can assist in monitoring patient care (and) “can be a vehicle for continuing education.”
References


