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Severe hypoglycemia in a diabetic patient with pituitary apoplexy: A case report

Binyam Melese Getahun

Eka Kotebe General Hospital, Ethiopia

Introduction: Hypoglycemia is a common occurrence in diabetic patients, often linked to glucose-lowering medications. However, in rare cases, other underlying causes may be responsible. We present a case of severe hypoglycemia in a type 2 diabetic patient, attributed to acute hypopituitarism secondary to pituitary apoplexy.

Case Presentation: A 45-year-old Ethiopian male with a 10-year history of type 2 diabetes, managed with 2 mg of oral glimepiride daily, presented with a 30-minute episode of altered mentation. Upon arrival at the emergency room, his blood glucose level was recorded at 38 mg/dl. Despite initial management, recurrent hypoglycemia persisted. Brain magnetic resonance imaging revealed a pituitary macroadenoma with hemorrhage, indicative of pituitary apoplexy. Laboratory investigations showed low levels of adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH), cortisol, and serum sodium. Subsequently transsphenoidal hypophysectomy was done.

Conclusion: The occurrence of hypoglycemia in a diabetic patient taking sulphonylurea monotherapy is common. But when it is severe enough to cause altered mentation, patients should be approached differently. In cases with clinical signs of cortisol deficiency, hypopituitarism should be considered as a potential underlying.

Biography

Binyam Melese Getahun is a researcher and medical doctor with internal medicine specialty with a special interest in hepathology. His expertise encompasses both clinical and research domains, with a strong commitment to advancing cancer prevention and management in Ethiopia. As the Principal Investigator for the "Decentralized HBV Testing and Treatment at Primary Care Level" study, Binyam leads innovative projects aimed at improving hepatitis B management. His research interests also include evaluating awareness and practices surrounding cancer screening and implementing pragmatic healthcare interventions. Binyam integrates evidence-based approaches to address critical public health issues. His work reflects a dedication to enhancing healthcare delivery and outcomes through research and practical implementation.

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