G63 Lymphocytic Hypophysitis Associated With Sudden Unexpected Death in a Young Woman

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The goals of this presentation are to recognize clinical setting and pathological changes in lymphocytic hypophysitis, and to recognize importance of sampling the pituitary for histopathology in young women with sudden unexpected death.

Lymphocytic hypophysitis causes endocrine dysfunction that could potentially lead to sudden unexpected death. Moreover, the definitive diagnosis requires histopathological examination of the pituitary gland. Given the inconsistent practice of pituitary sampling, this presentation will impact the forensic science community by presenting how lymphocytic hypophysitis may be an underrecognized cause of sudden death.

Lymphocytic hypophysitis is an unusual inflammatory condition of the pituitary gland, classically seen in females during the peripartum periods. The clinical presentation is varied and depends on hormonal deficiencies and pathophysiological effects on the target organs. While involvement of the neurohypophysis and secondary diabetes insipidus are rare, progression to multiple organ endocrinopathies is common. Pathologically the condition is characterized by lymphocytic infiltration of the hypophysis with occasional involvement of the thyroid and adrenal glands. In this report, we present the case of a 23-year-old woman diagnosed at autopsy with lymphocytic hypophysitis, with concomitant infiltrates in the thyroid gland and adrenal medulla, who died suddenly and unexpectedly, with no other apparent cause of death. While the precise mechanism of death is unclear, this case raises the possibility of endocrine dysfunction as a contributing factor to sudden death and emphasizes the need for greater awareness of the entity and routinely sampling the pituitary gland in cases of sudden unexpected death.

Lymphocytic Hypophysitis, Pituitary, Sudden Death

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