

Stevens-Johnson Syndrome after Albendazole

Sir,

Albendazole is a benzimidazole anthelmintic active against various nematodes, including *Toxocara* spp (1). Although it is generally well tolerated, adverse reactions have been reported, including fever, leucopenia, thrombocytopenia, raised transaminase levels and hair loss (2). We report a patient who developed Stevens-Johnson syndrome after starting albendazole (Zentel®).

A 57-year-old man was admitted for a widespread eruption on his trunk, proximal limbs and neck. The cutaneous lesions were erythematous or purpuric macular and slightly papular spots, showing a flat atypical target aspect (3) without significant epidermal detachment. Nikolsky's sign was negative. Painful oral and ocular erosions were present. Histological examination of a skin biopsy showed marked oedema of the superficial dermis and perivascular mononuclear cell infiltrates. General examination showed arthralgia and raised temperature (39.5°C). Blood cell count was normal except for slight eosinophilia (700/mm³). Erythrocyte sedimentation rate was accelerated (78 mm first hour). CRP (155 mg/l) and ALT and AST serum levels (172 U/l and 98 U/l, respectively) were increased. Serology for herpes virus I and II and *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* showed previous immunization. Albendazole 400 mg/day had been initiated 15 days before the eruption for toxocariasis. Albendazole was withdrawn and the cutaneous eruption disappeared in 20 days. Biological abnormalities returned to normal. The patient took no other drug. According to the standards of the French drug surveillance system, albendazole was the only culprit (4).

The diagnosis of Stevens-Johnson syndrome was retained

because of widespread macular and purpuric lesions, showing a flat atypical target aspect with predominant distribution on the trunk, associated with involvement of two different mucosal sites (3). The syndrome is related to drug intake in at least 50% of cases (5). This is the first reported case observed after albendazole treatment.

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