

Case reports of congenital heart block associated with maternal anti-SSA/SSB antibodies

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Objective

Congenital heart block (CHB) detected in utero is strongly associated with maternal antibodies to SSA (Ro) and SSB (La). Their pathogenic role in the development of CHB has been established in several studies. The mothers of affected infants frequently had autoimmune disease (systemic lupus erythematosus, Sjögren's syndrome) or were entirely asymptomatic. It is very difficult to identify pregnant asymptomatic mothers carrying anti-SSA/SSB antibodies.

Methods

We report two cases of infants born to asymptomatic mothers with anti-SSA/SSB antibodies at the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology A, at Charles Nicolle Hospital of Tunis, Tunisia.

Results

The two cases of children born from asymptomatic young mothers with anti-SSA/SSB. The first woman of 26 years of age, presented at 26 weeks of gestation. The second woman of 30 years of age, presented at full term. Caesarean deliveries for both women were scheduled at 37 weeks of gestation. A cardiologist was present during the delivery and both babies had a pacemaker lead successfully implemented.

Conclusion

The congenital heart block is a rare condition (1/20 000 birth). The congenital heart block is either associated to congenital malformations, either isolated. The isolated blocks are frequently associated to an autoimmune disease. The existence of a maternal autoimmune disease was studied. This immunological disease could be a systemic lupus erythematosus, Sjogren syndrome, Rheumatoid arthritis, collagenases. Maternal treatments were proposed to improve the prognosis of immunologic congenital heart blocks but remain controversial as no prospective randomised studies has been conducted on that matter yet. A preventive treatment by corticosteroids for primiparous women with anti-SSA antibodies is not indicated.