Hydrophobia of human rabies

Juliana R Tongavelona, Rivo Andry Rakotoarivelo, Fy S Andriamandimby

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CLINICAL VIDEO

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Juliana R. Tongavelona[1] | **Rivo Andry Rakotoarivelo**[2] | **Fy S. Andriamandimby**[3]

[1]Infectious Diseases, Universite d'Antananarivo Faculte de Medecine, Antananarivo, Madagascar

[2]Infectious Diseases, Universite de Fianarantsoa, Fianarantsoa, Madagascar

[3]Institut Pasteur de Madagascar, Virology, Antananarivo, Madagascar

Correspondence
Juliana R. Tongavelona, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Befelatanana, Antananarivo, Madagascar.
Email: tongavelona@gmail.com

Key Clinical Message

Hydrophobia is a clinical sign characteristic of human rabies. This sign occurs following paroxysmal contractions of pharynx responsible for hydrophobic spasms.

KEYWORDS

human rabies, hydrophobia

A 49-year-old man presented to the infectious disease ward, with hydrophobia allowing us to suspect human rabies. He has been bitten to the big toe by a dog 2 months prior to his hospitalization. He would have received a local wound care immediately after exposure. He also received only one dose of rabies postexposure vaccine by ID route 1-week aftermath.[1]

During the physical examination, the patient was conscious and polypneic at 34 bpm and tachycardia at 105 pulses/min. The body temperature was 37°C, and the blood pressure was 100/70 mm Hg. He was found to have aerophobia. He also complained of intense thirst, but any attempt of water intake caused hydrophobic spasm, described as a blockage in the throat with worsening of dyspnea, and he systematically repelled the glass of water (Video S1). The patient died the day of his admission. Rabies diagnosis was confirmed by direct fluorescent antibody test (DFAT) using postmortem brain samples (Figure 1).

The patient did not receive the four doses of rabies postexposure vaccine recommended by World Health Organization.[1]

Hydrophobia is characteristic of furious rabies. Other classical features of rabies are fluctuating consciousness, modified mental state, aerophobia, phobic or inspiratory spasms, and autonomous stimulation signals. Death occurs usually 5.7 days on patients showing furious rabies after the first symptoms.[2]

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

RAR: conceived the original idea. FSA: confirmed the diagnostic by direct fluorescent antibody test. JRT: wrote the manuscript in consultation with RAR and FSA. All authors provided critical feedback and helped shape the manuscript.

ORCID

Juliana R. Tongavelona http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4530-4118

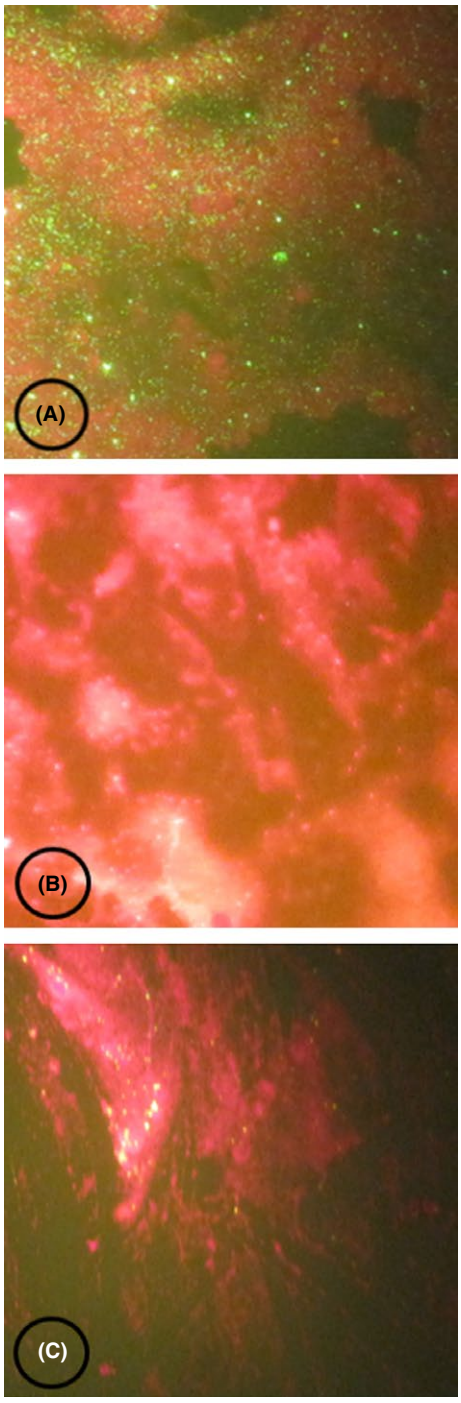

FIGURE 1 Result of direct fluorescent antibody test detecting rabies nucleoprotein. A, Positive control. B, Negative control. C, Human case

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

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