Remote spinal cord injury in mucopolysaccharidosis type IVA after cervical decompression

Morquio A syndrome (Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man #253000) is a lysosomal storage disease caused by deficiency of N-acetylgalactosamine-6-sulfatase encoded by the GALNS gene. Key clinical features are skeletal dysplasia and short stature.

A 17-year-old boy with Morquio A syndrome had slowly progressive signs of spinal cord compression at C1 to C3. His examination showed Medical Research Council grade 3 in the upper and 2 in the lower limbs, hyperactive reflexes without clonus or Babinski sign, and no sensorial impairment. After occipitocervical fixation in the prone position, he developed acute paraplegia, sensory losses below T3, and striking MRI abnormalities (figures 1 and 2).

Patients with mucopolysaccharidosis may develop remote spinal cord injuries from compression sites after general anesthesia in the prone position due to impaired cardiac output.1 This outcome is unusual,1,2 but providers and patients should be alert to this possible complication.

Felippe Borlot, MD, Paula Ricci Arantes, MD, PhD, Alberto Carlos Capel Cardoso, MD, PhD, Chong Ae Kim, MD, PhD

From the Instituto da Criança (F.B., C.A.K.), Hospital das Clínicas da Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade de São Paulo (HC FMUSP) (F.B., C.A.K., P.R.A., A.C.C.C.), Brazil.

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Correspondence to Dr. Borlot: felippe.borlot@gmail.com


Figure 2 Postoperative spinal cord MRI

Sagittal and axial T2-weighted images. Persistent abnormal hyperintensity signal at C1 to C2 is seen in the sagittal and upper axial cuts, marked narrowing of cord with epidural lipomatosis and an extensive myelomalacia area from T2 to T6 is seen.
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