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氏 名

HOMBU AMY

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Treatment of larva migrans syndrome with long-term administration of albendazole

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[要 旨]

Background: Larva migrans syndrome (LMS) is a clinical syndrome in human which is caused by the larvae migration of zoonotic parasites. It is well-known that ascarid nematodes, namely Toxocara canis, Toxocara cati, or Ascaris suum, the roundworms commonly found in the intestines of dogs, cats and pigs respectively, are the most important causative species of LMS that have been reported worldwide. Humans are considered as paratenic host of these ascarid nematodes which means that the larvae do not develop into adults and they do not lay eggs. The juvenile larvae penetrate into circulatory system and migrate to the liver, lungs, central nerves system or eyes causing LMS.

When a patient is infected and diagnosed of LMS, the recommended treatment is oral-administration of albendazole. However, the regimen has not been standardized around the world. In Japan, the duration of medication is much longer in comparison with other countries. Thus, the purpose of this study aimed to assess the efficacy and safety of long-term administration treatment of albendazole for larva migrans syndrome in order to standardize an effective treatment regimen.

Methods: Our laboratory receives requests for serological tests of parasitic infections from all over Japan. From 2004 to 2014, there were 4,934 cases of which 758 cases were diagnosed as positive of larva migrans syndrome. We recommend follow up tests three to four months after initial diagnosis in most cases. During this period, we received 299 cases as follow ups. We analyzed these follow-up cases on the ELISA results before and after the treatment as well as on medication used, dose and duration of medication, clinical findings, and side effects which were recorded on a consultation sheet provided by the attending physicians.

Results: Among 299 follow up cases, 11 cases were excluded due to the optical densities did not meet the criteria of this study, we have 288 cases as the subjects of this study. Those cases that used only albendazole have the efficacy rate of 78.0% and the side effects rate of 15.0%. However, the side effects reported were mild to moderate and there were no prolong severe cases.

Conclusions: The long-term administration treatment of albendazole is safe and effective for larva migrans syndrome.