Sprinkled palate: A non previously described clinical sign associated with sinusitis?
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Rocío palatino: ¿Un signo clínico asociado con sinusitis no descrito previamente?

Dr. Jorge Roberto López López*

To the Editor. Anterior and posterior purulent nasal discharge are signs and major clinical criteria for sinusitis diagnosis; foul breath is a minor one. Water’s X-rays or CT scans with opacification, air fluid level or thickened mucosa are the «golden standard» for diagnosis.

However, major clinical criteria are not always present and CT scans or X-rays are often not routine studies, so clinical signs obtained by classical clinical methods are always helpful.1-3

Hypothesis: Small sprinkled drops on the palatal mucosa may be a normal feature because of the presence of salivary glands, but in patients with sinusitis bigger or fairly apparent drops over the erythematous or pale mucosa may be a clinical sign of sinusitis, probably as a consequence of the obliged oral breathing, the inflammatory process and the physical changes in secretions.

Design: Descriptive survey.

Purpose: To know the prevalence and clinical meaning of the sprinkled palate.

Sample: 300 (119 female, 181 male) children 1 to 17 years old (media, 7.6), with suspected allergic diseases.

Method: Clinical study including naked eye inspection of palate, skin Prick tests and paranasal sinuses (PNS) X-rays taken when sinusitis was suspected.

Results: 214 patients with clinical sinusitis (176 with positive X-rays), 86 patients with other diagnosis (28 with positive PNS X-rays). Sprinkled palate (SP) present in 148 cases (PNS X-rays: positive = 100, Negative = 8, Not taken = 40). Sex: 88 male, 60 female. Age: 71% of cases under 6.

Clinical diagnosis: Rhinosinusitis (RS) = 94, Sinusitis (S) = 33, Rhinitis (R) = 16, Other = 2 (Otitis, conjunctivitis) and Asthma = 3 (also present as a second problem in 20 cases of RS, 6 of S and 6 of R).

Allergic stigmata present in 101 patients, skin prick test: positive to mites = 96, to other allergens = 19, negative = 33

Analysis: Sprinkled palate true positive for sinusitis = 100 (PNS X-rays positive), false positive = 8 (PNS X-rays negative), false negative = 104 (PNS X-rays positive) and true negative = 23 (PNS X-rays negative). Then sensitivity: 100/204 = 0.49; specificity: 23/31 = 0.74; predictive value: positive = 0.92 and negative = 0.18.

Conclusion: Although the last three estimates are limited since there was a lack of X-rays in 67 of the 300 patients, the sprinkled palate (SP) sign occurs frequently, mainly associated with sinusitis and aller-

* Alergia, Unidad de Pediatría, Hospital General de México. Profesor de Inmunología. Facultad de Medicina, UNAM.
gy, is easy to detect, inexpensive and may help to diagnose sinusitis.

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REFERENCES


Correspondencia:
Dr. Jorge Roberto López-López
Alergia. Unidad de Pediatría. Hospital General de México, O.D.
Dr. Balmis # 148
Col. Doctores
CP 06700, México D.F.