BABY OR REPTILE? IT’S YOUR CHOICE. TWO CASES OF SALMONELLA MENINGITIS

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Background and aims: Salmonella infections in humans most frequently cause gastroenteritis but can result in invasive illness, especially in infants and the immunocompromised. Reptiles are a recognised source for salmonellosis. Salmonella infections have been identified in up to 0.9% of cases of neonatal bacterial meningitis. We describe two cases of reptile associated Salmonella meningitis in neonates.

Methods: Case review of two infants diagnosed with Salmonella meningitis.

Results:

Case 1: A 2 week old girl was admitted with 1 day history of high grade fever, lethargy and poor feeding. On examination, she was irritable with a bulging anterior fontanelle. Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) examination showed WCC 555*10⁹/l (80% neutrophils), protein 2.43g/l and glucose < 0.5mmol/l. CSF and blood culture grew Salmonella monschau. She was treated with Amoxicillin, Gentamicin and Cefotaxime. The family had a bearded dragon lizard at home.

Case 2: A 3 week old girl was admitted with a 6 hour history of high grade temperature and poor feeding. She was irritable and febrile. CSF analysis showed WCC 900*10⁹/l (90% neutrophils), protein 13.2g/l and glucose 0.1mmol/l. Blood culture has grown Salmonella sp. (species awaited). She was treated with Amoxicillin, Gentamicin and Cefotaxime. Paternal grandmother had a tortoise at home and the baby's older sibling was in contact with it. He was unwell with diarrhoea.

Conclusions: Salmonella meningitis is very rare. When it does occur, there is a strong association with reptile contact. Always ask about pets when taking a history.