

CASE REPORT

DANDELION MISCHIEF

Farida Aziz

INTRODUCTION

Crying in an infant or young child can be an expression of many things, ^{1,2} e.g.

1. Hunger
2. Anger
3. Sadness
4. Discomfort
5. Pain, etc.

In these, outside factors can be as much a contributory cause as from inside the body, e.g.:

1. An angry nappy rash getting sore and painful with a wet nappy.
2. An open pin somewhere in the clothes.
3. Any other foreign body ³ pressing somewhere on the body or inside, e.g. in the nose, ears, throat, etc.

CASE

Ten months old Saleem was brought by his mother with episodes of crying for the past one day, which was prolonged and abnormal.

I examined him fully. He looked anxious but not ill. He retracted his neck and screamed loudly and fitfully. I could not detect any abnormality pointing to any disease. There were no tender points—and the child did not seem to be in constant pain.

Nevertheless I prescribed some Calpol—but asked the mother if crying episodes did not stop, she should see me again.

She came back after 24 hours—crying still continued.

From Ayub Medical College and Women & Children Hospital, Abbottabad.

PROF DR FARIDA AZIZ, Department of Paediatrics.

I examined the baby again—fully, leaving throat exam till the end as day before—and thanks and relief—solution was found.

At the back of the fauces rested a tiny dandelion seed ⁴ with a bit of its plume attached (Figure 1). This was removed with forceps by my ENT colleague—the bit was preciously saved on very clean cotton wool to be demonstrated to the rest of the family.



Fig 1. Dandelion with plumed seeds.

Baby's screaming protests stopped and the head obligingly stopped 'its retraction'.

COMMENTS

The best clue to diagnosis and treatment is the suspicion in the clinician's mind. One must not overlook symptoms or mother's feelings that her child is not well. It is better to withhold treatment, assess the patient's condition frequently and examine thoroughly—and most of the problems speak for themselves ⁶ By and large in the majority of patients, clue to diagnosis is found by a good history and a thorough clinical examination.

The other interesting feature about this case is the finding of an unusual type of foreign body in the child's throat. Most pediatric foreign bodies are either buttons, nuts, coins, aspirated foodstuff.

etc. The presentation is usually a sudden onset of difficulty in breathing, choking or chest infections not responding to treatment.

REFERENCES

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