

MEETING ABSTRACT

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# Successful treatment of pregnant women with syphilis and penicillin allergy

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## Background

Congenital syphilis (CS) is a transplacentally transmitted infection caused by *Treponema pallidum* that occurs in infants of untreated or inadequately treated mothers. The preferred treatment for syphilis in pregnant mothers is penicillin. In patients with a history of penicillin allergy, skin testing and oral challenge should be performed. Penicillin desensitization is indicated for pregnant women with syphilis who demonstrate immediate hypersensitivity to this drug.

## Methods

We evaluated 6 pregnant women with syphilis and history of allergy to penicillin. They were submitted to ENDA (*European Network For Drug Allergy*) questionnaire and skin tests (ST), prick and intradermal, to benzylpenicillin 10.000 U/mL with histamine as positive control and saline as negative control. The reactions were considered positive when the size of the initial wheal increased by 3 mm or greater after 15 minutes. We performed oral provocation test (OPT) with penicillin V in case of negative penicillin ST. Patients with negative OPT received the first dose of benzathine penicillin G 2.400.000IU IM at the hospital under supervision.

## Results

Case 1: AV, 22 yo, VDRL 1:64. History of urticaria more than 1 hour after benzathine penicillin administration, nearly 9 months ago.

Case 2: ACSC, 16 yo, VDRL 1:32. History of angioedema after amoxicillin intake (unknown interval

between intake and reaction). She had 2 episodes of allergic reaction (last one was 1 year ago).

Case 3: RSM, 38 yo, VDRL 1:64. History of urticaria minutes after benzathine penicillin administration at 14-years-old.

Case 4: GFL, 18 yo, VDRL 1:32. History of allergic reaction to penicillin during her first years of life (unknown interval between intake and reaction; unknown clinical manifestation).

Case 5: FAA, 16 yo, VDRL 1:1, positive TPHA. History of maculopapular exanthema 1 hour after benzathine penicillin administration. She had 2 episodes (at 5 and 12-years-old).

Case 6: MA, 29 yo, VDRL 1:4. History of allergic reaction at the site of the injection of benzathine penicillin 1h after administration. She had 2 episodes before 1 year-old.

All patients had negative tests (ST/OPT) and received treatment with penicillin without reactions.

## Conclusions

Adequate treatment of syphilis in pregnancy is crucial for prevention of CS. A reliable diagnosis is difficult in patients with a vague history of penicillin allergy. ST and OPT can be used for the evaluation of the hypersensitivity in order to decide whether desensitization is appropriate.

## Consent

Written informed consent was obtained from the patients for publication of this abstract and any accompanying images. A copy of the written consent is available for review by the Editor of this journal.

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