18 – Nocardia, Actinomycosis , Rhodococcus, and Melioidosis

Speaker: David M. Aronoff, MD, FIDSA, FAAM

IDBR INFECTIOUS DISEASE BOARD REVIEW AUGUST 20-24 2022

Nocardia, Actinomycosis, Rhodococcus, and Meliodosis

David M. Aronoff, MD, FIDSA, FAAM
John B. Hickam Professor of Medicine
Chair, Department of Medicine
Indiana University School of Medicine

6/21/2022

IDBR INFECTIOUS DISEASE BOARD REVIEW AUGUST 20-24 2022

Disclosures of Financial Relationships with Relevant Commercial Interests

- **None**

Case

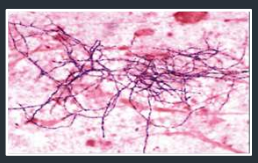
2022 PREVIEW QUESTION

54 year old man with 4 weeks of cough, low grade fevers, & left-sided chest pain. Received a liver transplant 11 months ago, complicated by rejection, requiring high dose steroids 4 months ago. He receives TMP/SMX three times a week. On exam, he is stable, chronically-ill appearing, febrile (101.1°F), has clear lungs and benign abdomen. Labs reveal a normal white blood cell count, slight anemia, & normal creatinine. Chest radiograph reveals hazy opacity in left lower lung zone. Chest CT reveals nodular air-space consolidation in the left lower lobe with central cavitation (image). Gram strain of bronchoalveolar lavage fluid reveals beaded gram positive filamentous organisms (image).

2022 PREVIEW QUESTION

Chest CT

BAL



CT Image from J. Bargehr, *et al. Clinical Radiology*, 2013-05-01, Volume 68, Issue 5, Pages e266-e271.
Gram stain image from Murray, *et al.* Medical Microbiology, 7E. 2013 Saunders, Elsevier.

2022 PREVIEW QUESTION

What is the most likely cause of this patient's pneumonia?

A. *Cryptococcus neoformans*
B. *Histoplasma capsulatum*
C. *Actinomyces israellii*
D. *Nocardia farcinica*
E. *Aspergillus fumigatus*

2022 PREVIEW QUESTION

What is the most likely cause of this patient's pneumonia?

A. *Cryptococcus neoformans*
B. *Histoplasma capsulatum*
C. *Actinomyces israellii*
D. *Nocardia farcinica****
E. *Aspergillus fumigatus*

18 – Nocardia, Actinomycosis , Rhodococcus, and Melioidosis

Speaker: David M. Aronoff, MD, FIDSA, FAAM

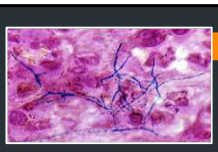
What are the most appropriate next steps in this patient's care?

A. Initiate therapy with intravenous TMP/SMX
B. Obtain a needle biopsy of the lung nodule to confirm the diagnosis
C. Obtain a brain MRI & start amikacin & TMP/SMX
D. Defer therapy until antimicrobial susceptibilities return

What are the most appropriate next steps in this patient's care?

A. Initiate therapy with intravenous TMP/SMX
B. Obtain a needle biopsy of the lung nodule to confirm the diagnosis
C. Obtain a brain MRI & start amikacin & TMP/SMX***
D. Defer therapy until antimicrobial susceptibilities return

Nocardia Infections



- **Microbiology:**
  - Beaded & branching gram-positive rods
  - Partially acid-fast
  - Aerobic (unlike anaerobic *Actinomyces*)
  - More than 80 species & >40 cause disease in humans
    - New phylogeny based on DNA sequence (*formerly*, *N. asteroides* complex): **species names are *lookups***.
- **Pathogenesis:**
  - **Inhalation** (most common)
  - **Direct inoculation** through the skin

Photo: http://path.upmc.edu/cases/case226/dx.html; Good reference: Restrepo A & Clark NM. *Clinical Transplantation*. 2019:e13509.

Images of *Nocardia*

- **Beaded**
- **Branching**
- **Gram positive**
- **Partially acid-fast**

Gram stain bronchial wash

Gram stain abscess

Clinical Features of *Nocardia*

- **Immunocompromised**
  - **Solid organ transplant**, hematopoietic transplant, chronic steroids, alcoholism, diabetes, CGD, CF, autoantibodies against GM-CSF (seen in autoimmune pulmonary alveolar proteinosis), anti-TNF therapy, ectopic ACTH syndrome, AIDS (less common)
    - *PJP prophylaxis may not prevent nocardiosis*
  - Months to years after transplantation
- **90%: slowly progressive pneumonia** with cough, dyspnea, & fever
  - *Aspergillus* similar; co-infections occur
  - Similar to cryptococcal disease & actinomycosis
  - Can disseminate to any organ (**brain** in particular: **get MRI;** can be asymptomatic!)

Margalit I, *et al. Clinical Microbiology and Infection* (2021).

Clinical Features of *Nocardia*

- **10%**: Skin infections from direct inoculation:
  - Immunocompetent host in tropical region (*N. brasiliensis*)
  - Immunocompromised patient who gardens or walks barefoot
  - **Sporotrichoid** lesions
  - **Mycetomas**: chronic, progressive, lower limbs, draining sinuses (similar to Actinomycetes). "Madura foot"

Baradkar V P, *et al. Indian J Pathol Microbiol* 2008;51:432-4 Sharma NL, *et al. Indian J Dermatol Venereol Leprol* 2008;74:635-40

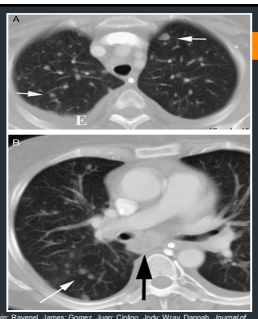
18 – Nocardia, Actinomycosis , Rhodococcus, and Melioidosis

Speaker: David M. Aronoff, MD, FIDSA, FAAM

Nocardia Diagnosis

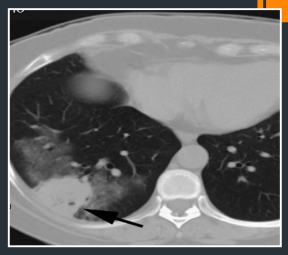
- **Diagnosis**:
  - Suggestive **radiology**
    - Chest imaging: **nodules**, cavities, infiltrates with consolidation, effusions, ground-glass opacities
    - MRI brain: single or multiple **abscesses**
  - Blood **culture**, BAL, biopsy
    - Gram stain, **modified acid-fast stain**, culture
  - Species identification with nucleic acid sequencing or MALDI: **predictive of drug susceptibility**

- 56-year-old woman post kidney-pancreas transplant & *N. brasilienses*
- Small lung nodules (white arrows), small right pleural effusion & subcarinal lymphadenopathy (black arrow)



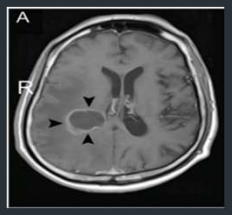
Pulmonary Nocardiosis: Computed Tomography Features at Diagnosis. Blackmon, Kevin; Ravenel, James; Gomez, Juan; Ciolino, Jody; Wray, Dannah. *Journal of Thoracic Imaging*. 26(3):224-229, August 2011. DOI: 10.1097/RTI.0b013e3181f45dd5

- 55-year-old woman with acute myelogenous leukemia & *N. nova*
- Axial CT image without contrast = solitary RLL **mass** with single focus of **cavitation** (arrow) & surrounding **ground-glass opacity**



Pulmonary Nocardiosis: Computed Tomography Features at Diagnosis. Blackmon, Kevin; Ravenel, James; Gomez, Juan; Ciolino, Jody; Wray, Dannah. *Journal of Thoracic Imaging*. 26(3):224-229, August 2011. DOI: 10.1097/RTI.0b013e3181f45dd5

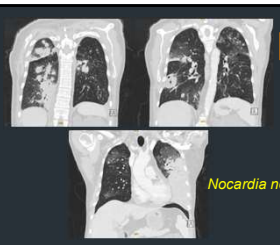
- Right frontoparietal subcortical ring lesion with a central dark signal & bright **ring enhancement** (black arrowheads) in postcontrast T1-weighted image.



Nandhagopal, Ramachandiran, Zakariya Al-Muharrmi, and Abdullah Balkhair. "Nocardia brain abscess." *QJM* 107.12 (2014): 1041-1042.

Case

- 60 YO s/p kidney transplant on immunosuppression with 3 week of cough, fevers, dyspnea & malaise
- SARSCoV2 negative
- MRI head negative



Nocardia nova

1. Severe bilateral pneumonia with scattered areas of ground glass attenuation, consolidation, soft tissue nodules & tree-in-bud micronodules throughout
2. L>R pleural effusions & small pericardial effusion

Case

Nocardia cerradoensis

Total body CT & brain MRI of a **solid organ transplant recipient** with disseminated nocardiosis. (A) Sub-cutaneous nodules (white arrow) on CT-scan. (B) Nodule in the R upper lung seen on CT-scan. (C) Multiple round-shaped, contrast-enhanced lesions on gadolinium-enhanced T1-weighted brain MRI.

Lebeaux D, *et al. Current Opinion in Infectious Diseases* 34(6):611-618, December 2021.

18 – Nocardia, Actinomycosis , Rhodococcus, and Melioidosis

Speaker: David M. Aronoff, MD, FIDSA, FAAM

Nocardia Treatment

- **Susceptibility testing**
  - Important because of drug resistance
- **TMP/SMX** is mainstay (skin = monotherapy; LZD/TZD alternatives)
- Empiric 2-drug combination therapy:
  - TMP/SMX + one of these:
    - Amikacin, imipenem/meropenem >> ceftriaxone/cefotaxime
    - Linezolid/tedizolid ± imipenem/ceftriaxone/cefotaxime as alternate agents
- Empiric 3-drug combination therapy for CNS (TMP/SMX + IMI + Ami)
- 2-6 weeks induction followed by 6+ months of oral TMP/SMX monotherapy

Restrepo A & Clark NM. *Clinical Transplantation*. 2019:e13509
Margalit I, *et al*. "How do I manage nocardiosis?." *Clinical Microbiology and Infection* (2021).

Nocardia Treatment

Antibiotics **2022**, *11*, 612

Table 3. Therapeutic management of nocardiosis according to clinical presentation.

Localization	Empiric Induction Treatment *,‡	Maintenance Oral Therapy ‡	Duration
Primary skin Pulmonary stable	TMP/SMX orally Linezolid orally	TMP/SMXM inocycline Amoxicillin/clavulanate	6–12 months
Pulmonary moderate/severe	TMP/SMX iv + imipenem OR amikacin TMP/SMX iv + ceftriaxone ± linezolid Linezolid+ ceftriaxone OR imipenem	TMP/SMX Minocycline Amoxicillin/clavulanate	6–12 months
CNS involvement	TMP/SMX iv + imipenem ± amikacin TMP/SMX iv + imipenem + linezolid Linezolid + imipenem Imipenem + amikacin	TMP/SMX	9–12 months
Disseminated (>two organs without CNS involvement)	TMP/SMX iv + imipenem OR amikacin TMP/SMX iv + linezolid + imipenem OR amikacin Imipenem + amikacin	TMP/SMX Minocycline Amoxicillin/clavulanate	6–12 months

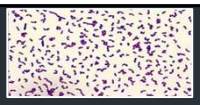
TMP/SMX: trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole; CNS: central nervous system. * Continue multi-drug parenteral therapy for two to six weeks and adjust based on susceptibility test. ‡ Antibiotic dosing: TMP/SMX 15 mg/kg (divided in three to four doses), linezolid 600 mg q12h, imipenem 500 mg q6h, minocycline 100–300 q12h, amikacin 20–30 mg/kg/day, ceftriaxone 2 g q24h.

van den Bogaart L & Manuel O. *Antibiotics* (2022)

Nocardia Buzzwords

- **B**eaded
- **B**ranching
- **B**rain (+ lung)
- **B**actrim

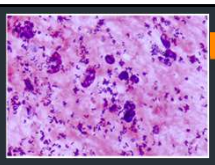
Rhodococcus



- **Clinical findings**:
  - Indolent pneumonia (80%) in **immunocompromised** host
  - **Fever, cough, hemoptysis**, fatigue, subacute, pleuritic CP
  - Nodules, thick-walled **cavities**, infiltrates, effusions possible
  - Extrapulmonary dissemination possible (**skin & brain**)
  - Mimic of TB, NTM, *Aspergillus*, *Nocardia*

Photo: microbe canvas

Rhodococcus



- **Typical patient**:
  - T cell immunosuppressed
    - HIV+ & CD4<100; organ transplant
  - Inhalation or ingestion
  - Farm, soil, manure or horse exposure in some patients
- **Microbiology**: *R. equi* is the most common
  - Gram positive, **aerobe**, **coccobacillary**
  - Colonies can be **salmon pink**
  - **Weakly acid fast**: can be mistaken for *Nocardia* but **no branching**

Image from W.V. Lin *et al. / Clinical Microbiology and Infection* (2019)

Rhodococcus

33 year-old HIV+ male (CD4 = 20) who lived on a cattle & horse farm

Presented to hospital with 1 month of fever, dry cough, 13# weight loss, sweats & anorexia

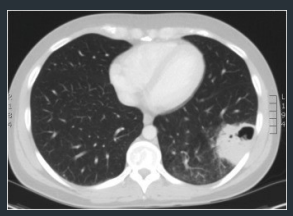


Image from Stewart A., *et al. IDCases*. (2019)

18 – Nocardia, Actinomycosis , Rhodococcus, and Melioidosis

Speaker: David M. Aronoff, MD, FIDSA, FAAM

Rhodococcus

- **Diagnosis:**
  - **Culture** followed by 16S rRNA, MALDI-TOF
  - Tissue: gram stain, **necrotizing granulomatous** reaction; microabscess
  - Blood cultures may be positive (>25%)
- **Treatment:**
  - Combination therapy is recommended
  - **Macrolide or fluoroquinolone** in combination with rifampin or in combination with 2 of the following: vancomycin, imipenem, linezolid, or an aminoglycoside x 2-3 wks then 2 drugs until clinical response complete (macrolide or FQ + a second agent)

Lin WV, *et al. Clin Micro Infect* (2019), Stewart A., *et al. IDCases*. (2019) Kotton CN, *Uptodate* (2022)

Rhodococcus Buzzwords

- **Short** Gram positive rod (coccobacillus)
- **Cavitary** pneumonia (hemoptysis)
- **Salmon pink** colonies
- Advanced **HIV**
- **Horse** / manure exposure

Case

A 62 yr old sheep rancher from Northern Australia referred hospitalized for refractory pneumonia that failed to respond completely to multiple, prolonged courses of antibiotics over 3 months, leaving him with continued low-grade fever, productive cough & asthenia.

Gram negative rods noted in moderate abundance on sputum Gram stain & in sputum culture. Identification by automated system failed & isolate sent to referral lab.

Question

- Which of the following would have been a likely source of this infection?

A. Hospital nebulizer while hospitalized in Australia (nosocomial superinfection)
B. Water or soil from his ranch
C. Coughing worker on his ranch
D. Sick sheep on his ranch.

Question

- Which of the following would have been a likely source of this infection?

A. Hospital nebulizer while hospitalized in Australia (nosocomial superinfection)
B. Water or soil from his ranch***
C. Coughing worker on his ranch
D. Sick sheep on his ranch.

Melioidosis Take-Aways

- Microbiology lab:
  - Facultative intracellular gram-negative rod, *Burkholderia pseudomallei*
  - Oxidase positive
  - Characteristic bipolar staining with a "safety pin" appearance
- Typical patient:
  - SE Asia, northern Australia
    - *Esp.* Northeastern Thailand & northern Australia

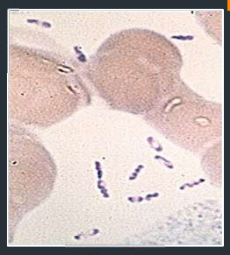
Chakravorty A, Heath CH. *Australian Journal of General Practice* (2019).

18 – Nocardia, Actinomycosis , Rhodococcus, and Melioidosis

Speaker: David M. Aronoff, MD, FIDSA, FAAM

Bacteria with "safety pin" appearance

- *Yersinia pestis*
- *Vibrio parahemolyticus*
- *Burkholderia mallei & pseudomallei*
- *Haemophilus ducreyi* (chancroid)
- *Klebsiella granulomatis* (granuloma inguinale)



Y. pestis

Melioidosis Take-Aways

- **Clinical findings:**
  - **Acute** or chronic pneumonia or sepsis
  - Transmission via percutaneous inoculation, **inhalation**
  - Risk factors = **diabetes**, alcoholism, chronic renal & lung disease
  - Acute infection more common than chronic infection

Chakravorty A, Heath CH. *Australian Journal of General Practice* (2019)

Melioidosis Take-Aways

- **Clinical findings:**
  - Acute infection can present with **pneumonia, bacteremia & septic shock**
  - Metastatic abscesses: skin ulcers or abscesses more common than bone, spleen, brain, prostate
  - Chronic infection presents like TB (cough, hemoptysis, night sweats)
  - Can become latent & reactivate like TB (rare)

Wiersinga WJ, *et al. Nat Rev Dis Primers*. 2018

Melioidosis Take-Aways

- **Diagnosis: Culture**
  - **Alert the lab you are concerned about this pathogen!**
  - Ashdown's media
- **Treatment: Treat all cases**
  - Mild disease: initial intensive **IV therapy for two weeks** followed by eradication therapy **orally for 3-6 months**
  - *B. pseudomallei* **resistant** to penicillin, ampicillin, 1st/2nd generation cephalosporins, polymyxin, aminoglycosides
  - TMP/SMX for **postexposure prophylaxis**
  - **Meropenem or ceftazidime** then **tmp/smx for 3-6 months**

Wiersinga WJ, *et al. Nat Rev Dis Primers*. 2018
https://jcm.asm.org/content/54/12/2866
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2600349/

For the most up-to-date recommendations by the International Melioidosis Society: http://www.melioidosis.info

Melioidosis: **Buzzwords**

- **SE Asia** (Thailand)/Australia
- **Soil/water exposure** (inhalation/inoculation/rainy season; post-tsunami injury)
- Pneumonia + **severe sepsis**/shock or multiple abscesses
- Can be **years after exposure** (not usually)
- **Safety pins** on stain; Gram negative rods
- **Ashdown media**

Le Tohic, s., *et al. European Journal of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases* (2019)

Melioidosis: **Bonus Material**

- Small outbreak (n=4, 2 deaths) in US associated with a contaminated **aromatherapy product**

BRIEF REPORT

Multistate Outbreak of Melioidosis Associated with Imported Aromatherapy Spray

United States CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

Walmart Recalls Better Homes and Gardens Essential Oil Infused Aromatherapy Room Spray with Gemstones Due to Rare and Dangerous Bacteria; Bacteria Identified in this Outbreak Linked to Two Deaths

FUTURE BOARD EXAM?

https://www.cdc.gov/melioidosis/outbreak/2021/index.html
N Engl J Med 2022;386:861-8. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa2116130

18 – Nocardia, Actinomycosis , Rhodococcus, and Melioidosis

Speaker: David M. Aronoff, MD, FIDSA, FAAM

Glanders

- Caused by *Burkholderia mallei* & is rare in humans
- Requires close contact w/ infected animals (horses, donkeys, mules)
- Bacteria enter through the eyes, nose, mouth, or skin wounds
- *B. mallei* is an obligate mammalian pathogen & must cause the disease to be transmitted between hosts
- Africa, Asia, Middle East, Central America, South America
- Similar presentation to melioidosis

Smith ME, Gossman WG. Glanders And Melioidosis. [Updated 2017 Oct 6]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2018 Jan.

Actinomyces Take-Aways

- Microbiology lab:
  - Gram-positive, **anaerobic**, non–spore-forming bacteria
  - Part of the normal mucosal flora of the oral, gastrointestinal, respiratory, & genital tracts
  - *Actinomyces israelii* most common species
  - Produce **sulfur granules**
- Typical patient:
  - Recent dental procedures
  - Aspiration (thoracic)
  - IUD (pelvic)

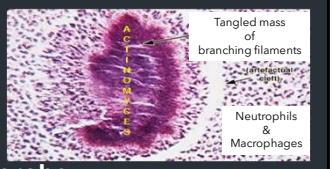
Photos: http://intranet.tdmu.edu.ua/ & webpathology.com

Actinomyces Take-Aways

- Clinical findings:
  - Oral-cervicofacial more common>abdominal & thoracic infection
  - **Lumpy jaw**
  - Slow growing mass, **ignores tissue planes**, can necessitate, form sinuses, fistulas
  - DDx: Cancer, TB, *Nocardia*
- Diagnosis:
  - Culture, histopathology (sulfur granules)
- Treatment:
  - **Penicillins** (PCN, ampicillin) x weeks to months

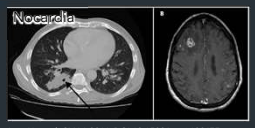
Actinomyces: **Buzzwords**

- **Sulfur granules**
- **Dental work**
- **IUD**
- **Erosive mass**
- **Filamentous anaerobe**

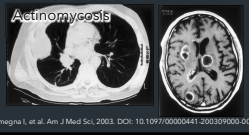


Lesions in the **Lungs & Brain**

- Actinomycosis
- *Aspergillus, Zygomycetes*
- *Blastomyces, Coccidioides, Cryptococcus, Histoplasma*
- *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*
- *Nocardia*
- Infectious emboli (SBE)
- Lemierre syndrome (*Fusobacterium*)
- *Toxoplasma*
- Tumors



Leis JA, *et al. CMAJ*, 2011. DOI:10.1503/cmaj.100477



Colmegna I, et al. Am J Med Sci, 2003. DOI: 10.1097/00000441-200309000-00010

Causes of Sporotrichoid Lesions

Nodular lymphangitis

Organism	Exposure
Sporothrix schenckii	Gardening, soil, splinters, animal bites/scratches
Nocardia brasiliensis	Gardening, soil, splinters
Mycobacterium marinum	Aquarium, fish handling, water exposure
Cutaneous leishmaniasis	Living/traveling in endemic regions

Photo: eScholarship

18 – Nocardia, Actinomycosis , Rhodococcus, and Melioidosis

Speaker: David M. Aronoff, MD, FIDSA, FAAM