Continuing Medical Education

CME MCQ – 20

Urticaria: Current Opinions about Etiology, Diagnosis and Therapy

The following questions are based on a recently published paper in: Acta Derm Venereol 2007; Urticaria: Current Opinions about Etiology, Diagnosis and Therapy; Torsten Zuberbier and Marcus Maurer.

1. Urticaria is characterized by the rapid appearance of wheals and/or angioedema. Indicate features that specifically define a wheal:

A. A central swelling of variable size.
B. An associated itching or sometimes burning.
C. A fleeting duration of usually 1–24 h.
D. Pronounced swelling of the lower dermis or subcutis.
E. Painful swellings that lasts up to 72 h.

2. Each of the following statements regarding acute urticaria is true *except*:

A. The most frequent reason appears to be viral infections in the upper respiratory tract.
B. Lifetime prevalence ranges from 12% to 15% or even 23,5%.
C. Drugs can elicit acute urticaria both as allergens (e.g. penicillin) and as pseudoallergens (e.g. non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).
D. ANCA levels correlate with disease activity.

3. Occurrence of anti-FcεRI-α-autoantibodies have described to be of pathophysiological relevance in some patients with urticaria. Indicate the statement(s) below with relevance to the subject:

A. Autoantibodies have been found in both patients with idiopathic chronic urticaria as well as in patients with pseudoallergy against food whose symptoms cleared on elimination diet.
B. Thyroid autoantibodies are apparently associated with chronic urticaria.
C. Plasmapheresis has been of temporary benefit in some cases of chronic urticaria.
D. IgE-mediated food allergy is rare in urticaria.
E. Drugs can elicit acute urticaria.

Recommended answers:

1. A + B + C are typical features of a wheal. Angioedema is defined by the features mentioned in D + E.

2. D.

3. A and D. Comment: Clinical improvement of urticaria after removal plasmapheresis suggests an autoimmune background in the affected individual.