A Case Report on Monkeypox, HIV, and Neurosyphilis

Background: Monkeypox is a zoonotic virus with a presentation similar to smallpox and endemic to Central and Western Africa that had a global outbreak in May 2022, impacting non-endemic areas in numbers never seen before. Those affected in this upsurge are mainly men who have sex with men, similar to those most affected by HIV and the current syphilis epidemic. The authors seek to provide insight into the clinical course of monkeypox and associated sexually transmitted infections in the immunocompromised and discuss potential complications that may arise as they pertain to a male-to-female transgender patient. This case report is unique because literature on monkeypox in transgender patients, especially in one with concurrent HIV and syphilis infection, is limited at best.

Presentation: We present the case of a 46-year-old Caucasian transgender woman with a history of HIV and syphilis from New York City who was diagnosed with monkeypox at Downstate University Hospital. The patient presented with 2 weeks of pustular skin rash on the face, arms, and legs, fatigue, and decreased appetite. The monkeypox infection was confirmed by PCR of samples that were collected from lesions found on the face and legs. The patient's labs demonstrated positive RPR of 1:32, HIV viral load of 166,000, CD4 of 60 cells/mm^3. Lumbar puncture resulted in CSR VDRL positive, suggesting neurosyphilis. The patient was administered IV penicillin treatment for neurosyphilis, BIKTARVY for HIV antiretroviral therapy, and started on oral tecovirimat. The patient's symptoms resolved in crusted-over lesions by day 7.

Conclusion: This case report illustrates the hospital course of a transgender patient with syphilis, uncontrolled HIV infection, and concurrent monkeypox infection. Current literature suggests that people with HIV/AIDS have more severe disease courses than the general population when infected with monkeypox and highlights the importance of HIV screening in all suspected cases of monkeypox.