

Reviewer #1:

Scientific Quality: Grade B (Very good)

Language Quality: Grade A (Priority publishing)

Conclusion: Accept (General priority)

Specific Comments to Authors: very well written and discussed case series

Response: Thank you for your comments.

Reviewer #2:

Scientific Quality: Grade C (Good)

Language Quality: Grade B (Minor language polishing)

Conclusion: Major revision

Specific Comments to Authors: Thank you for the opportunity to review this work. This manuscript is a case report presented with two patients with cervical myelopathy. There is an interesting topic due to cervical myelopathy being a potential stroke mimic at initial evaluation in the emergency department and leading to administration of an intravenous rt-PA that deteriorates the patient with spinal epidural hematoma. Detailed comments about this case report are as follows: -1 Title. Does the title reflect the main subject/hypothesis of the manuscript? Yes

Response: Thank you very much.

-2 Abstract. Does the abstract summarize and reflect the work described in the manuscript? Yes. However, please provide the full term of this abbreviation in the Core tip: "SSEH."

Response: As advised, we have now added the full term of SSEH in the Core tip, that is, "spontaneous spinal epidural hematoma" (line 59)

-3 Key words. Do the key words reflect the focus of the manuscript? Maybe. However, a keyword could not be found in the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) (available from <https://meshb.nlm.nih.gov>): "cervical myelopathy," "stroke mimics," "cranial nerve symptom," "cervical spine metastases." Changing to the appropriate term might be suitable.

Response: Thanks. We have now changed the keywords according to MeSH. The detail is as follows.

"Cervical cord; Spinal cord diseases; Stroke; Neck pain; Cranial nerves; Hematoma, epidural, spinal; Neoplasm metastasis; Case report" (line 54-55)

-4 Background. Does the manuscript adequately describe the background, present status and significance of the study? Please provide the full term of this abbreviation, "rt-PA," in the first place found in the main text. Because the first place is "Cervical myelopathy may mimic stroke when it present with hemiparesis, in which intravenous rt-PA would be catastrophic" without mentioning the full term of this abbreviation.

Response: Thank you for your advice. We have now added the full term of rt-PA in the text, that is, "recombinant tissue-type plasminogen activator" (line 83)

-5 Methods. Does the manuscript describe methods (e.g., experiments, data analysis, surveys, and clinical trials, etc.) in adequate detail? Not applicable.

Response: Thank you very much.

-6 Results. Are the research objectives achieved by the experiments used in this study?
Yes

Response: Thank you very much.

-7 Discussion. Does the manuscript interpret the findings adequately and appropriately, highlighting the key points concisely, clearly and logically? -In discussion, the authors mentioned that "The first patient was diagnosed as spontaneous spinal epidural hematoma (SSEH). The causes of SSEH include coagulopathy, drugs, spinal puncture, trauma, and pregnancy" from the previous literature. To provide more information from case 1 in this manuscript, please discuss the potential cause of the spinal epidural hematoma in this case 1. -Although cervical myelopathy is a potential stroke mimic, please discuss and provide the other clues to differentiate this condition from the stroke other than neck pain and absence of cranial nerve symptom, such as the potential risk factors, onset, clinical course, previous symptoms, and signs of cancer, trauma, coagulopathy from drug or herbal use, etc.

Response: Thank you for your advice. The cause of SHE in case 1 was ascular malformation. We have now added it in treatment of case 1 and discussed it in discussion. They are "The pathology showed that the hematoma originated from a vascular malformation." (Line 124-125), and "In our case, the SHE originated from a vascular malformation." (Line 177)

As advised, we have now discussed other clues to differentiate cervical myelopathy from the stroke. The detail is as follows.

"In addition, there are other clues that can help us make the identification. Neck movement and trauma may trigger cervical myelopathy, while they are not necessarily related to stroke^[53]. For patients with a history of cancer and tuberculosis, we need to be alert to the metastasis and invasion of spinal cord." (Line 216-219)

-8 Illustrations and tables. Are the figures, diagrams and tables sufficient, good quality and appropriately illustrative of the paper contents? -Maybe. There is an asymmetry in the axial plane of the brain CT scan in Figure 2A. Because there is the asymmetry in orbit between right and left in this axial plane, it seems the uncorrected axial plane of the brain CT scan. Meanwhile, the authors stated that "CT found no abnormalities in the brain." So, please provide the new image of the tilt-corrected axial plane. -To complete the patients' clinical course, please provide the column of patient outcomes for each literature in Table 1.

Response: As advised, we have now provided a new CT scan (figure 2A). The outcomes for each literature have added in table 1. Thank you for your recommendations.

-9 Biostatistics. Does the manuscript meet the requirements of biostatistics? Not applicable.

Response: Thank you very much.

-10 Units. Does the manuscript meet the requirements of use of SI units? Yes

Response: Thank you very much.

-11 References. Does the manuscript cite appropriately the latest, important and authoritative references in the introduction and discussion sections? There is an incorrect DOI of Reference 51. In the manuscript, the authors stated the Reference 51 that "Marinella MA, Barsan WG. Spontaneously resolving cervical epidural hematoma presenting with hemiparesis. Ann Emerg Med 1996; 27:514-517 [PMID: 8604873 DOI: 10.1016/S0196-0644(96)70245-7]." However, "DOI: 10.1016/S0196-0644(96)70245-7" direct to the URL "https://www.annemergmed.com/article/S0196-0644(96)70245-7/fulltext" of the article entitled: "Preemptive Cerebellar Ataxia in Varicella." Please recheck the DOI of this reference. On the other hand, PMID 8604873 is corrected.

Response: Sorry for the confusion. We have rechecked all the references carefully. The DOI of references 44 and 51 could not be found at <https://doi.crossref.org/simpleTextQuery>, so they just included the PMID. (Line 384 and 405)

-12 Quality of manuscript organization and presentation. Is the manuscript well, concisely and coherently organized and presented? Yes

Response: Thank you very much.

-13 Research methods and reporting. Authors should have prepared their manuscripts according to manuscript type and the appropriate categories, as follows: (1) CARE Checklist (2013) - Case report; (2) CONSORT 2010 Statement - Clinical Trials study, Prospective study, Randomized Controlled trial, Randomized Clinical trial; (3) PRISMA 2009 Checklist - Evidence-Based Medicine, Systematic review, Meta-Analysis; (4) STROBE Statement - Case Control study, Observational study, Retrospective Cohort study; and (5) The ARRIVE Guidelines - Basic study. Did the author prepare the manuscript according to the appropriate research methods and reporting? -The CARE checklist mentions the "strengths and limitations in your approach to this case." Therefore, please state the strengths and limitations of the approach to this case in the manuscript in the discussion section.

Response: As advised, we have now stated the strengths and limitations in the discussion section. The detail is as follows.

"Our report highlights the importance of neck pain and lack of cranial nerve symptom in distinguishing stroke from mimics. However, stroke mimics is a series of more complex and heterogeneous diseases, and more research is needed to explore more practical identification methods in the future." (Line 220-223)

-14 Ethics statements. For all manuscripts involving human studies and/or animal experiments, author(s) must submit the related formal ethics documents that were reviewed and approved by their local ethical review committee. Did the manuscript meet the requirements of ethics? No. Please provide the ethics declarations.

Response: Thank you for your advice. We have now provided the ethics declarations in the text. The detail is as follows.

“ETHICS

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Second Affiliated Hospital and Yuying Children's Hospital, Wenzhou Medical University. Written informed consents for the publication of this report were obtained from the patients and their spouses.” (Line 232-236)