

Raynaud Phenomenon of the Nipple: A Clinical Case Report

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Abstract

Objective: In Raynaud's phenomenon of the nipple there is a change in color, accompanied by pain or discomfort during breastfeeding.

Case report: A 29-years old female patient, breastfeeding, develops a severe bilateral nipple pain during and after breastfeeding and biphasic change in nipple color, with difficulties in the breastfeeding technique. She was medicated with nifedipine and recommended application of warm compresses to the nipples and use of electric breast pump, showing complete resolution after four weeks of treatment.

Conclusion: Raynaud's phenomenon of the nipple should be considered in breastfeeding women who report nipple pain or discomfort. In clinical practice, nipple pain is a very frequent complaint, and responsible for many cases of early abandonment of breastfeeding. It is therefore essential to make an early diagnosis and implement a correct and immediate treatment.

Keywords: Nipples; Breast Feeding; Raynaud Disease; Vasoconstriction; Nifedipine

Introduction

The Raynaud phenomenon are recurrent episodes of vasospasm, and results from an exaggerated and inappropriate response of the cutaneous circulation due to exposure to cold or emotional stress (1). In its typical presentation, there is a change in skin color, associated with pain, burning sensation or paresthesia (1). The diagnosis is based on the clinical history and physical exam. It usually presents on the extremities of the upper and lower limbs, but it can also affect other body parts, such as the nipple (2). In Raynaud's phenomenon of the nipple there is a

change in color, accompanied by pain or discomfort during breastfeeding. This clinical case intends to reinforce the role of the family doctor in the approach of this clinical entity, since it is a treatable cause of pain during breastfeeding and represents an important risk of stopping breastfeeding (3, 4).

Case report

A 29 years old female patient, healthy and without regular medication, G1P1, with history of uncomplicated evolutionary pregnancy, spontaneously conceived with eutocic term delivery at 40 weeks, without complications. In the second week postpartum, she develops severe bilateral nipple pain during and after breastfeeding, associated with difficulties in the breastfeeding technique.

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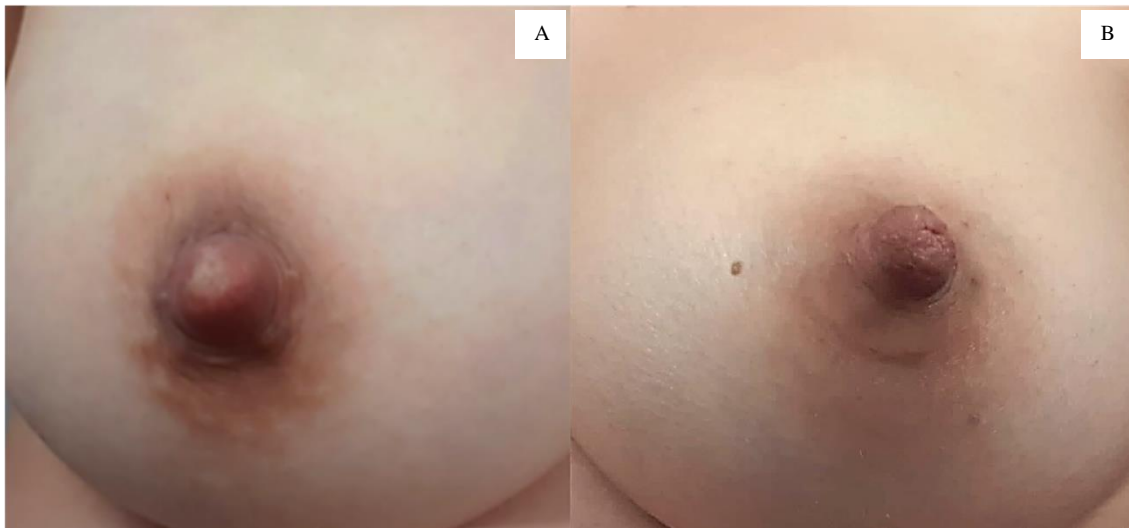


Figure 1: A. Clinical image of nipple's Raynaud Phenomenon after breastfeeding versus B. Clinical image of the same nipple after treatment

One month after the onset of symptoms, she went to a physician who, on physical examination, observed a pale and whitish nipple, with no other changes (Figure 1A), initiating treatment with an oral antifungal. In the newborn's 2-month consultation with the Family Doctor, she reports persistence of nipple pain complaints, describing concomitant biphasic change in nipple color (pallor and, later, blushing), assuming the diagnosis of Raynaud's phenomenon of the nipple. The application of warm compresses to the nipples after feedings and the use of electric breast pump were recommended, with some transient relief. In a reassessment visit, she was medicated with nifedipine, showing a good response and complete resolution of the complaints after four weeks of treatment (Figure 1B).

Discussion

Raynaud's phenomenon of the nipple should be considered in breastfeeding women who report nipple pain or discomfort. Despite the few reported cases, the diagnosis of this clinical entity is possible through a complete clinical history and physical examination of the mother and newborn. Treatment is based on local techniques, avoidance of vasoconstrictors such as nicotine and caffeine, and pharmacotherapy with nifedipine, a calcium channel blocker that is safe for breastfeeding women.

Conclusion

Nipple pain can be attributed to a variety of etiologies and is usually the result of a cascade of events (1, 4).

In clinical practice, it is a very frequent complaint, being responsible for many cases of early abandonment of breastfeeding or its exclusivity (5). It is therefore essential to make an early diagnosis and implement a correct and immediate treatment, promoting the maintenance of breastfeeding and its exclusivity until six months of age, due to the inherent benefits (6), as recommended by the World Health Organization (7).

Conflict of Interests

Authors declare no conflict of interests.

Acknowledgments

None.

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Nipple's Raynaud Phenomenon

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