Pneumomediastinum and Pneumothorax in a Neonate with Meconium Aspiration Syndrome

A term neonate born through meconium-stained amniotic fluid from instrumented delivery, (Apgar score 7/8), without need for resuscitation, presents with grunting, cyanosis and respiratory distress by the 5th minute of life, with pulse oximetry revealing a 70%-75% saturation which resolved with oxygenotherapy.

The neonate was admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), requiring oxygenotherapy (maximum FiO2 40%, incubator environmental servo-oxygen delivery) for a saturation >95%. Initial bloodwork included a venous blood gases analysis (pH 7.26, pCO2 49.9 mmHg, HCO3- 22.4 mmol/L, BE -4.7 mmol/L, lactate 4.3 mmol/L), non-elevated C-reactive protein and a normal hemogram.

A chest x-ray showed a small pneumothorax (left lung apex) and left hemithorax radiolucency (outlining the mediastinal structures) with extrapleural air sign, suggesting a large pneumomediastinum. On the right hemithorax, diffuse, asymmetric, patchy pulmonary opacities mixed with focal overinflation areas are suggestive of meconium aspiration syndrome (MAS) (Fig. 1).

Oxygen was successfully weaned off, with no signs of respiratory distress by the second day. A subsequent chest x-ray on the sixth day, showed complete reabsorption of the pneumomediastinum and pneumothorax (Fig. 2), after which the neonate was discharged from the NICU.

Pneumomediastinum is uncommon in neonates (2.5:1000 live births) but should be kept in mind particularly in cases of preterm neonates, meconium aspiration, positive pressure ventilation or congenital pneumonia.1 Patients are usually asymptomatic, requiring no specific treatment, but should be monitored for evidence of cardio-respiratory compromise or development of other.
air leaks, especially pneumothorax. Infants with tension pneumomediastinum should be treated urgently with ultrasound-guided percutaneous drainage. A chest x-ray should always be performed (lateral and anteroposterior views), although recent studies suggest a lung ultrasound can also help confirm the diagnosis. In the presence of a high index of suspicion, a correct and early diagnostic can prevent iatrogenic damage such as unnecessary insertion of a thoracic drain or prolonged antibiotherapy.

**AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION/CONTRIBUIÇÃO AUTORAL**

JCA and RSG: Wrote the manuscript
MN and ARS: Critically revised the manuscript

JCA e RSG: Escreveram o manuscrito
MN e ARS: Fizeram a revisão crítica do manuscrito

**RESPONSABILIDADES ÉTICAS**

**CONFLITOS DE INTERESSE:** Os autores declaram a inexistência de conflitos de interesse na realização do presente trabalho.

**FONTES DE FINANCIAMENTO:** Não existiram fontes externas de financiamento para a realização deste artigo.

**CONFI DENCIALIDADE DOS DADOS:** Os autores declararam ter seguido os protocolos da sua instituição acerca da publicação dos dados de doentes.

**CONSENTIMENTO:** Consentimento do doente para publicação obtido.

**PROVENIÊNCIA E REVISÃO POR PARES:** Não comissionado; revisão externa por pares.

**ETHICAL DISCLOSURES**

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

**FINANCING SUPPORT:** This work has not received any contribution, grant or scholarship.

**CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA:** The authors declare that they have followed the protocols of their work center on the publication of data from patients.

**PATIENT CONSENT:** Consent for publication was obtained.

**PROVENANCE AND PEER REVIEW:** Not commissioned; externally peer reviewed.

**REFERENCES**

