The Need For Universal Neonatal Screening For Congenital Hypothyroidism In India

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My opinion

Thyroid hormone plays a critical role in the development and maturation of the fetal brain. Deficient production of thyroid hormone or a defect in thyroid hormone receptor activity can lead on to hypothyroidism. Congenital hypothyroidism (CH) is one of the most common preventable causes of mental retardation in children. The incidence of CH in India is estimated to be 2.1 per 1000 live births which is at least eight times higher than what is reported in western literature. Universal neonatal screening has been acknowledged as the most effective method to prevent the severe developmental and physical morbidities associated with congenital hypothyroidism (CH). However, despite proven benefits, efforts to implement it in India are still in its infancy. Congenital hypothyroidism features manifest minimally at birth making it difficult to pick up cases on the basis of clinical features alone. Clinical diagnosis is made in only 10% children in the first month of life and 30% in the first 3 months. Hence there is a high risk of delayed diagnosis exposing the child to various degrees of developmental delay.

Conclusion

In view of the high incidence, apparently asymptomatic nature, propensity to cause neurodevelopmental delay and residual impairment even with treatment, early detection and treatment of CH would be the most cost effective method to confront this problem. Despite the crushing evidence of high incidence of CH, India continues to await a plausible universal screening program. It is high time we start routine neonatal screening for CH to tackle this preventable cause of mental retardation.

Reference(s)

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Reviews

Review 1

Review Title: The Need For Universal Neonatal Screening For Congenital Hypothyroidism In India
Posted by Dr. Chiesa Ana on 16 Apr 2011 11:25:23 PM GMT

1 Is the subject of the article within the scope of the subject category? Yes
2 Are the interpretations / conclusions sound and justified by the data? Yes
3 Is this a new and original contribution? No
4 Does this paper exemplify an awareness of other research on the topic? Yes
5 Are structure and length satisfactory? Yes
6 Can you suggest brief additions or amendments or an introductory statement that will increase the value of this paper for an international audience? Yes
7 Can you suggest any reductions in the paper, or deletions of parts? No
8 Is the quality of the diction satisfactory? Yes
9 Are the illustrations and tables necessary and acceptable? Yes
10 Are the references adequate and are they all necessary? Yes
11 Are the keywords and abstract or summary informative? Yes

Rating: 5

Comment:
This opinion stresses the need of the implementation a neonatal screening for CH in regions like India that still lacks of its benefits.

Although references support the opinion may be that numbers on rate birth and expected cases per year would add some information as well as to remember the incidence found in the small experiences done.

It is useful to aware pediatricians and endocrinologist on this subject.

Competing interests: no

Invited by the author to make a review on this article?: No

Experience and credentials in the specific area of science:
My group began in Argentina with the neonatal screening program for CH and still works on it.

Publications in the same or a related area of science: Yes


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