That large amounts of group B vitamins could serve to protect against CON is largely inference derived from this study of Woolington and from the seemingly salutory effect of group B vitamins noted in treatment of this condition. Further support may be added from the observations of Huang et al[9] in four patients with CON in whom the administration of chloramphenicol was continued and treatment with vitamins alone instituted. Three patients so handled recovered excellent vision. A fourth child exhibited spontaneous improvement of CON while continuing chloramphenicol therapy. On relapse, vitamin administration was associated with partial improvement.

With these considerations, it was decided that the third course of chloramphenicol in this child would be arbitrarily accompanied by continuation of large does of vitamins B_6 and B_{12}. The conduct of this patient's three courses of chloramphenicol delineates somewhat of an experimental pattern, the main variable having been the use of vitamin B_6 and B_{12} on the third course with all other factors, such as the use of chloramphenicol, multivitamins, and auxiliary methods of treating CF, being basically unchanged.

The conclusion in this one instance would indicate that vitamin B_6 or B_{12} or both have in some unknown way permitted the safe administration of a total dose of chloramphenicol approximately 5½ times that which resulted in an optic neuritis on last previous administration. A broader conclusion than this from a single case report is tenuous at best. However, it would appear reasonable to administer very large doses of group B complex vitamins to any patient in whom a large total dose of chloramphenicol may be anticipated.

SUMMARY

A 12-year-old girl with cystic fibrosis (CF) experienced two consecutive episodes of chloramphenicol optic neuritis (CON) following total doses of 135 and 47 gm chloramphenicol, respectively. She has been spared a third occurrence, while continuing doses in excess of 200 gm chloramphenicol were given simultaneously with very large doses of vitamins B_6 and B_{12}. The suggestion is made that large doses of group B vitamins given concomitantly with large total doses of chloramphenicol may serve as a preventive measure against CON.

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