

Impending Doom Of Hand By Jellyfish Sting

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INTRODUCTION:

Around 100 species of venomous jellyfish are accounted severe morbidity and even death in warm tropical climate regions. Recently, new deadly species belongs to class of box jellyfish found lurking in Penang shoreline with few reported cases of Irukandji like syndrome.

CASE REPORT:

A 5-year old boy presented with diffuse redness and swelling over his left hand with history stung by jellyfish one day prior. The child felt sudden sharp intense pain and hot sensation directly after stinging. Within minutes, he started to experience Irukandji-like symptoms with excessive sweating, generalized body ache and vomiting. After initial aid, the child brought home. However, the pain and swelling of right hand worsened over the next day. Upon examination revealed cold peripheries and limited fingers movement with gross swelling of hand. Fasciotomy done without delay owing to the increasing swelling. Intraoperatively, noted pale muscle with excessive serous discharge. Post operatively, developed dusky discoloration over thumb, index and middle fingers with emergence of hyperpigmentation. Intravenous anticoagulant was commenced immediately resulting in recirculation of the digits. Upon follow up, wound much improved and better movements of all small joints of the right hand.



Figure1: Compartment syndrome with distal cyanosis of fingers
Figure 2: Post operative and follow up at second week

DISCUSSIONS:

Centre for Marine and Coastal Studies (Cemacs) have reported, two species belongs to class of box jellyfish – *Chiropsoidesbuitendijki* and *Morbakka*, are now breeding in the sea around Penang.

Discharge of the jellyfish venom is worsened by mechanical stimuli. Australian Resuscitation Council (ARC) recommends vinegar application followed by tentacle removal and ice pack application. Sea water should be used if vinegar is not available¹.

Jellyfish venom has lipolytic and proteolytic effect on skin and soft tissue including the neurovascular bundle. Local soft tissue swelling due to venom can lead to compartment syndrome. Neurotoxin of the venom can cause transient peripheral and autonomic nerves².

CONCLUSION:

Lack of statistical data on jellyfish sting cases in Malaysia creates lack of knowledge in public. Collaboration of marine authorities with tourism department is needed to promote public awareness. Safety measurement such as multilingual warning signs, safety nets and emergency kit with inclusion of vinegar should be prepared. Despite the possibility of serious adverse events, treatments are merely symptomatic. Prompt and immediate treatment with admission for further care highly warranted for limb salvage.

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