

Navigating optic neuritis in pregnancy: balancing visual health and maternal safety

Shalini Rajamany, Emily Ng Ming Choo, Siti Aliah Rosly

Department of Ophthalmology, Hospital Selayang, Batu Caves, Selangor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Optic neuritis, an inflammatory condition of the optic nerve, can lead to sudden vision loss or visual disturbances. Managing optic neuritis during pregnancy presents unique challenges due to the potential risk to both the mother and the foetus. A 33-year-old Chinese woman, gravida 2 para 1 at 30 weeks of gestation, presented with one month blurring of vision of the right eye. Initial presentation showed visual acuity of 6/60 of the right eye with negative relative afferent pupillary defect. Optic nerve function test reduced to 70% and Bjerrum shows enlarged blind spot over the right eye. Posterior segment showed hyperaemic disc with blurred margin superonasally and normal vessels. Physical examinations were unremarkable. Infective screening was normal, ANA, dsDNA, Aquaporin 4 Receptor Antibody and MOG Antibody were negative. MRI brain and orbit showed mildly oedematous and increased intensity of right optic nerve (4.6 mm) compared to left (3.2 mm). During follow-up, her vision improved to 6/9 without any intervention however her contrast sensitivity remained reduced. Observation without the use methylprednisolone may be appropriate in pregnant women with optic neuritis and a favourable visual outcome. This conservative approach avoids potential risks associated with steroid use during pregnancy, while still allowing for close monitoring and timely intervention if necessary.