

Non-accidental head trauma

Non-accidental head trauma (NAHT) is a common cause of traumatic brain injury in childhood, origin of profound and disabling neurological sequelae, and in the most disgraceful cases, ultimately death. Subdural hematoma (SDH) is the most common intracranial finding in Non-accidental head trauma (NAHT). On the other hand, congenital bleeding disorders are a minor but a significant cause of ICH in the neonate and toddler. Not uncommonly, intracranial bleeding is the first sign of a severe inherited coagulation disorder. In the presence of an unexpected intracranial bleeding after a minor trauma or without a clear history of the related events, physicians and caregivers may be confronted to the dilemma of a possible child abuse. It must be bear in mind that physical abuse and bleeding disorders can co-exist in the same child.

Hinojosa et al. reported the case of two siblings in whom a diagnosis of hemophilia coexisted with the presumption of a non-accidental head trauma. Child abuses were inflicted in both children with a spare time of 2 years. A diagnosis of mild hemophilia was prompted in the first sibling after initial NAHT, while inflicted trauma was evident in the second sibling after neuroimaging findings and concomitant lesions. Lessons from this case in co-existing bleeding disorders and inflicted trauma and legal implications derived will be discussed thereafter. The possibility of a bleeding disorder should be considered in all children presenting with unexplained bleeding at a critical site in the setting of suspected physical maltreatment, particularly intracranial hemorrhage (ICH) ¹⁾.

1)

Hinojosa J, Simó M, Armero G, Becerra MV, Alamar M, Candela S, Culebras D, Muchart J, Berruero R. Hemophilia and non-accidental head trauma in two siblings: lessons and legal implications. Childs Nerv Syst. 2022 Oct 28. doi: 10.1007/s00381-022-05713-2. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 36303077.

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