Diagnosis and Treatment of Extra-Pulmonary Tuberculosis: Overcoming Challenges

Jiyoung Kang

Organization Jeju National University, Jeju National University Hospital, Department of Internal Medicine
Current Position Associate Professor

Educational background

2007-2013 M.A., Catholic University of Korea, Graduate School, Department of Medicine
1995-2001 B.A., Catholic University of Korea, College of Medicine

Professional experience

2025-Present Associate Professor, Jeju National University, Jeju National University Hospital, Department of Internal Medicine
2023-2025 Clinical Assistant Professor, Jeju National University, Jeju National University Hospital, Department of Internal Medicine
2010-2022 Clinical Assistant Professor-Assistant Professor-Associate Professor, Catholic University of Korea, Seoul St. Mary's Hospital, Department of Internal Medicine
2001-2007 Intern & Resident, Catholic Medical Center

Extrapulmonary tuberculosis (EPTB) constitutes approximately 15-20% of all tuberculosis (TB) cases, with the lymph nodes ad pleura representing the most frequently affected sites. Accurate and timely diagnosis of EPTB remains challenging, because symptoms of EPTB are non-specific and insidious, to obtain specimens from the involved sites is sometimes difficult, and most forms of EPTB are paucibacillary in nature. These diagnostic pitfalls in EPTB make the treatment more difficult as to when to stop it or how to monitor the response.

In this lecture, I will review clinical performance of existing tests- ADA, Xpert MTB/RIF (Ultra), immunologic tests- according to various specimens or affected sites and introduce newly developed tools to enhance the diagnostic yield for EPTB. I will also discuss the optimal duration of treatment and adjuvant steroid therapy according to various types of EPTB including treatment shortening strategy. During the follow-up of EPTB, paradoxical response is not rarely encountered, especially lymph node TB, brain tuberculoma and TB pleurisy which may further complicate clinical management. A practical approach for the paradoxical response will be presented and it would be helpful for better TB control.