ULLRICH-TURNER's, SHERESHEVSKIJ-TURNER's OR MORGAGNI's SYNDROME?

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SUMMARY

The Author reports the description of a woman presenting the anomalies of Turner's Syndrome in a study by Morgagni (1761).

In a letter published on Human Genetics, Lönberg and Nielsen ([1]) pointed out that the name of a syndrome often appears somewhat fortuitous. In fact, the anatomoclinical picture known generally as Turner's syndrome was not first described by this Author.

Other names, as Shereshevskij, Ullrich and Bonnevie are bound to it ([1]) and the terms of Ullrich-Turner's or Shereshevskij-Turner's syndrome are also used, particularly in the East european literature ([4]). Nevertheless the phenotypical features of the syndrome had been already described by Authors as Funche, Kermauer, Rössli and Wallart ([3]). But, according with Simpson ([3]), we must acknowledge to Mor gagni the first description of this syndrome.

In his treatise "De sedibus et causis morborum per anatomen indagatis", first published in 1761, Morgagni ([2]) described a case of a woman, about 60 years old, dead at hospital of peritonitis in 1749. A necroscopy was made by the Author to illustrate to the students the female genital system.

The woman never had menstruated nor delivered and was much below the normal in height, although taller than a dwarf. Breasts were very small, as well as the external genitalia. The clitoris was reduced only to a little tubercle. Hymenal remnants were present, but the vaginal introitus was so small that a finger could be introduced only with difficulty. The vagina was narrow and not overcoming 4 transverse fingers in depth. The vaginal epithelium was smooth and lacking in mucous folds. The uterus was like that of a newborn in size and the cervix was twice the uterine body. The tubes were very thin and lengthened. There were no gonads, but rather hard corpuscles of white appearance near the distal ends of the tubes (streak gonads?).

Morgagni concluded that the woman had no ovaries and he felt that this fact was to connect with mammary hypopla-

sia, lack of menstruations and sterility. Examination of the urinary apparatus revealed the presence of polycistic kidneys bilaterally.

This described by Morgagni represents therefore the first case of Turner' syndrome, ante litteram.

An historical acknowledgement of Morgagni description is correct, although is useless a change of the current terminology, always more oriented on clinical and etiopathogenetical concepts like "gonadal dysgenesis" and "streak gonad syndrome", rather than on Authors names.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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