Imaging in internal medicine - Hemophagocytosis

Imagens em clínica médica - Hemofagocitose

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Figure 1. Hemophagocytosis. Well-differentiated macrophages in bone marrow digesting hematological cells

Hemophagocytosis corresponds to finding well-differentiated macrophages in bone marrow that digest hematological cells (red blood cells, leukocytes or platelets). It is fundamental to detect hemophagocytic elements to diagnose the “hemophagocytic syndrome or syndrome of macrophagic activation”, a rare and fatal condition resulting from uncontrolled activation and proliferation of T cells and excessive activation of macrophages\(^1\). The clinical manifestations of the syndrome include fever, hepatosplenomegaly, pancytopenia in peripheral blood, hepatic dysfunction, coagulopathy and hyperferritinemia\(^2\). It may be primary (familial) or secondary (reactive form), associated to infectious, inflammatory and neoplastic processes\(^3\). Patients submitted to treatments involving immunosuppression and transplant of organs are at higher risk. The finding of hemophagocytosis in myelogram is rare but should be taken into account. When associated with cytopenia in peripheral blood, it indicates the need for more comprehensive clinical and laboratory investigations to diagnose and treat hemophagocytic syndrome.

REFERENCES