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Pathology Question:

What is the etiology, symptoms, and treatment of Sjogrens Syndrome?

Report:

The patient in the presented case does not have Sjogren's Syndrome but does suffer from medication induced xerostomia. It is important to understand the difference between medication induced xerostomia as well as xerostomia associated with a disorder because the preferred treatment options are different. Sjogrens Syndrome is a chronic autoimmune disorder where the immune cells attack and destroy the exocrine glands, particularly the salivary and lacrimal glands. There are two types of Sjogren's Syndrome: Primary and Secondary. Primary occurs in the absence of other autoimmune disorders while Secondary occurs with another autoimmune disorder. Currently the cause of Sjogren's Syndrome is unknown however genetic factors, hormones and environmental factors may predispose an individual or trigger the onset of this disorder.

Lymphatic infiltration into the salivary and lacrimal glands causes chronic inflammation leading to their glandular dysfunction. Decreased saliva and tear production are a result of the salivary and lacrimal gland dysfunction and thus explains why the two hallmark symptoms of Sjogren's Syndrome are xerostomia and keratoconjunctiva sicca (dry eyes). There is no cure for Sjogren's Syndrome and so treatment is focused on relieving the symptoms caused by this disorder. Pilocarpine and Cevimeline are two sialagogue drugs that are commonly used to treat the xerostomia caused by Sjogren's syndrome. These two drugs are direct-acting muscarinic agonist that have high affinity for the muscarinic receptors located in the salivary and lacrimal glands. The activation of these muscarinic receptors by using one of these drugs results in increased saliva production. It is important to not that the use of sialagogue drugs are recommended to increase saliva production when the problem is due to salivary gland dysfunction and therefore it is not the recommended treatment option for medication induced xerostomia.

References:

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