CASE REPORT

Abstract: A 63-years-old man was found dead with the body soaking in water lying face up on a riverbank. Autopsy and diatom examination demonstrated that the cause of death was drowning. He had undergone hypophysectomy 20 years earlier. Autopsy, pathological and endocrinological findings demonstrated secondary and chronic hypothyroidism, hypogonadism, and adrenal insufficiency. The cadaver had fallen into the river, and received numerous wounds such as abrasions and subcutaneous hemorrhage. Moreover, it was suspected that he had developed hypothermia before death. Cortisol in the blood and 17-OHCS in urine were within the reference range. We suspect that the adrenocortical hormone was secreted into the blood as a result of various stresses due to wounds and hypothermia. However, it was suspected that sufficient hormone might not be secreted due to chronic adrenal insufficiency. This insufficient cortisol causes the decrease in the stress resistance, and might influence his cause of death. Moreover, as hypothyroidism decreases thermogenesis, he might have fallen into hypothermia easily. In addition, because both adrenocortical insufficiency and hypothyroidism caused the hypoglycemia, he might have fallen into the loss of consciousness. Therefore, it was considered that he had died by drowning, in relation to the adrenocortical insufficiency and panhypopituitarism. J. Med. Invest. 53: 183-187, February, 2006

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