

Odeynophagia

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This complaint is mainly seen by GPs. Odeynophagia means that the patient has so much pain in the throat that he cannot swallow, and thus he develops painful dysphagia. The important thing to remember is that the doctor should not think that the

patient is malingering or exaggerating his complaints. Many of these patients will recover fast if they are admitted to hospitals and given intravenous fluids for 1 to 2 days with parenteral antibiotics. Thus whether the patient has severe tonsillitis and pharyngitis or tracheitis or oesophagitis, the patient's symptoms are genuine in the sense that the patient cannot swallow either solid or liquid.

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MORE ON TUBERCULOSIS

The 6-month treatment duration applies only to pulmonary tuberculosis and *not to* extrapulmonary forms.

The duration of antituberculous chemotherapy in neurotuberculosis is a minimum of 12 months, and treatment must be started with at least four first-line drugs: isoniazid, rifampicin, pyrazinamide, and ethambutol (or streptomycin, isoniazid, rifampicin, and pyrazinamide if objective assessment of visual function, a prerequisite for ethambutol therapy, is not possible).

Even in patients with large-volume CSF centrifugation from samples obtained by external ventricular drain, the yield of acid-fast bacilli is extremely low and the historical figure of 50% smear positivity in CSF cited by Gary Maartens and Robert Wilkinson is both unrealistic and misleading.

A secured microbiological diagnosis is seldom, if ever, achieved in neurotuberculosis and the decision to start treatment must never be delayed for microscopic confirmation of acid fast bacilli.

The association between diabetes and tuberculosis is epidemiologically important in light of the large increase in type 2 diabetes in tuberculosis endemic settings.

In terms of treatment, diabetes and tuberculosis also interact. Rifampicin increases metabolism of most oral antidiabetic drugs, complicating glycaemic control during tuberculosis treatment. Conversely, diabetes can also have a negative effect on tuberculosis treatment.

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