Teaching NeurolImage:

Axial muscle atrophy in adult-onset Pompe disease

Bashar Katirji, MD
Vita Kesner, MD, PhD
Rana B. Hejal, MD
Amer Alskehlee, MD,
MSc

Address correspondence and
reprint requests to Dr. Amer
Alskehlee, Department of
Neurology, University
Hospitals Case Medical Center,
Case Western Reserve
University, 11100 Euclid
Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44106-
5040
amer.alskehlee@uhhospitals.org

Figure Noncontrast CT scan of the chest showing severe atrophy with fat replacement of the paraspinal (arrows) and chest wall muscles in the patient (A) compared to an age-matched normal subject (B)

A 38-year-old man presented with a 2-year history of dyspnea resulting in hypercarbic respiratory failure. CT scan of the chest displayed atrophy of the thoracic paraspinal and chest wall muscles (figure). He had neck and abdominal muscle weakness with normal limbs strength. Creatine kinase was increased (704 IU/L; normal 0 to 240). Electromyography showed insertional myotonic discharges in paraspinal muscles without voluntary motor unit activity. Biopsy of the deltoid muscle demonstrated scarce lysosomal glycogen accumulation. Acid-alpha-glucosidase activity in a dried blood spot was reduced (0.59 to 3.88 pmol/punch/hour; normal: 10.00 to 48.96).

Adult-onset Pompe disease is a rare, potentially treatable glycogen storage disorder.¹ It may be overlooked because of the preferential involvement of the axial muscles resulting in truncal muscle weakness and respiratory failure.²

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From Neurological Institute (B.K., V.K., A.A.) and Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine (R.B.H.), University Hospitals Case Medical Center, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH.

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