**“I can’t feel my arm – “stoned by fish” vs “horse shoe crabbed” dilemma**

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**Introduction**

We present a case of an unidentified marine creature sting in our emergency department which progressed into local envenomation and subsequently requiring surgical intervention.

**Case Description**

A 31 year old Myanmar male presented with swelling of his right hand after a painful tiny sting by an unidentified marine creature at river back which he eventually threw back into the river. Initially, the patient identified the creature by its local name, ‘Belangkas’ - the Atlantic Horseshoe Crab as an animal with a sharp spine and sharp legs.

Patient came to the hospital, concerned, as the swelling progressively worsened up to his forearm. Otherwise, there were systemic envenomation symptoms and the patient was very certain he was not bitten by a snake. Physical examination showed a prick over the medial aspect of his right little finger with no local necrosis, tender, swelling up to the forearm however the compartment was soft with no neurovascular compromise.

His vital signs were stable: FBC/RP/LFT and coag screening were within normal parameter. Except for a raised CK of 585 and a lactate of 2.9.

His right hand X-ray showed no foreign body.

**Discussion**

As the Atlantic Horseshoe Crab was known to contain tetrodotoxin which was of high concern, the rate of proximal progression (RPP) of the swelling was observed. Initial treatment with IM ATT 0.5 ML and IV analgesia was given.

The rate of proximal progression increased by 2 cm within 3 hours, and the patient was still complaining of pain over his right upper limb. Patient were started on Tab Doxycycline 100 mg BD and IV Morphine was given. He was hydrated adequately, monitored for compartment syndrome with his right hand elevated and treated by hot water immersion.

However on day 3 of observation, the patient developed a blister over his little finger and was referred to the orthopaedic team as possible necrotising fasciitis. Patient further admitted that he was not confident about it as the animal was thrown away as either it’s a horseshoe crab or a stonefish.

**Conclusion**

The learning point and dilemma in this case is whether the patient had been stung by “belangkas” or Stonefish (usually will be found in deepwater), the treatment mainly supportive and hot water immersion which in this case treatment is given as per recommendation. However if progression of swelling over hand were rapid, to refer orthopedic team for surgical intervention if needed.

**Keywords**

*Stonefish, Atlantic Horseshoe Crab, Unidentified marine creature sting, cutaneous manifestation*