**Herbal Supplements and Acute Heart Block: A Case Presentation**

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The use of herbal supplements warrants physician awareness of potential dangers. *Aleurites moluccana* (Candlenut) taken by a pediatric patient caused a toxic digoxin-like effect with 2nd degree heart block requiring monitoring in the pediatric intensive care unit (ICU).

A 16 year old male was admitted to the ICU with 2nd degree heart block. The patient presented to the emergency department after taking a “nuez de la india,” or Candlenut, as an herbal weight loss supplement. Within 2 hours of ingestion he developed chest and abdominal pain with profuse vomiting. ECG showed 1st degree heart block with T wave inversion. The patient later became somnolent with chest pain radiating to the left arm. Repeat ECGs showed progression to 2nd degree heart block, Mobitz Type 1 and later to 2:1 block. Labs showed elevated troponins and an undetectable digoxin level. Echocardiogram demonstrated normal structure, wall motion and coronary origins. The following day troponins began to down-trend. By the third day his symptoms had resolved, troponins were within normal limits and ECG showed significant improvement. By his outpatient follow up his ECG had normalized.

Herbal supplement use has increased over recent years. Ingestion of *Aleurites* seeds, which have been used in traditional medicine for centuries, has resulted in severe poisonings with gastrointestinal symptoms, convulsions and some cases reporting heart block in adults. The mechanism of heart block from this seed is unknown. In our patient ECG findings resembled digoxin toxicity. The *Aleurites* seed contains linolenic, oleic, and linoleic acids which have been suggested to increase affinity of sodium-potassium ATPases to cardiac glycosides, increasing susceptibility to digoxin-like compounds.

Given the increasing use of herbal supplements, physicians must be aware of potential toxicities. By analyzing such cases physicians can develop a better understanding of these substances to help guide management.