

NEPHROLOGY - I

RENAL TUBULAR ACIDOSIS - APPROACH AND MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: Renal tubular acidosis is a group of inherited and acquired tubular disorders presenting as hyperchloremic normal anion gap metabolic acidosis in the presence of normal kidney function. The four phenotypes include: Type 1- distal renal tubular acidosis, Type 2- proximal renal tubular acidosis (isolated or renal Fanconi syndrome), Type 3- combined proximal and distal tubular dysfunction and Type 4- aldosterone deficiency / resistance. Clinical presentation includes polyuria, polydipsia, failure to thrive and occasionally, refractory rickets and evaluation for renal tubular functions and genetic studies are essential for making the diagnosis. Management includes supplementation of alkali, potassium, phosphorus and active vitamin D3 and specific therapy for identified etiology. Early diagnosis and management improve long term outcomes.

Keywords: RTA, Renal tubular acidosis, Renal Fanconi syndrome, Normal anion gap metabolic acidosis, Renal rickets.

Points to Remember

- RTA is characterised by hyperchloremic normal anion gap metabolic acidosis.
- Presenting features include failure to thrive, polyuria and polydipsia.
- Proximal RTA is characterised by impaired proximal tubule bicarbonate reabsorption and distal RTA due to impaired distal hydrogen secretion.
- The complete normalization of plasma bicarbonate levels with alkali supplementation suggests a diagnosis of dRTA.
- Early diagnosis, adequate alkali supplementation and regular long-term follow-up with monitoring of growth, bony deformities and renal function is required.

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