

MNEMONIC FOR THE DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS OF NON-CASEATING GRANULOMAS

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To the Editor:

Sarcoidosis is an elusive disease. It was named so because it was thought to mimic sarcoma (sarcoid-sarcoma-like) when first described in skin lesions (1). It is defined as a systemic granulomatous disease of unknown etiology that primarily affects the lung and lymphatic system of the body. The adjusted annual incidence of sarcoidosis among African Americans is roughly three times that among Caucasian Americans (35.5 vs 10.9 cases/100,000) with a lifetime risk in blacks in the United States of 2.4% as compared to 0.85% in whites (2). A diagnosis of the disorder is made using clinical and radiological findings supported by histological evidence of non-caseating, epithelioid - cell granulomas in more than one organ system and exclusion of other disorders known to cause similar pathology (3). For this purpose, we present a mnemonic to remember most common causes of systemic non-caseating granulomas in form of letters of the alphabet (Table 1). This is aimed at physicians dealing with the condition of Sarcoidosis. References for each diagnosis is presented in the on-line supplement as Appendix 1.

Sarcoidosis remains a diagnosis of exclusion. The authors would like to point out that once the presence of non-caseating granulomas has been documented, above conditions should be ruled out before the diagnosis of Sarcoidosis can be confirmed.

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Table 1. Mnemonic for causes of non-caseating granulomas

Character	Diagnosis	Reference
A	Atypical Tuberculosis	(4-8)
B	Berylliosis	(9-11)
C	Carcinomatosis	(12-15)
D	Drug Reaction	(16-23)
E	Eosinophilic Granuloma	(24)
F	Foreign Body Reaction	(25-28)
G	Granulomatous Arteritis	(29-32)
H	Hypogammaglobinaemia	(33)
I	Infection from Fungi	(34-40)
J	Jaundice of Biliary Cirrhosis	(41-44)
K	Kitty (Cat) Scratch Disease	(45)
L	Leprosy	(46-48)
M	Mycobacterium Tuberculosis	(49, 50)
N	Non - Hodgkin's Lymphoma	(51-53)
O	Other Lymphomas (Hodgkin's)	(54, 55)
P	Pneumonitis of Hypersensitivity Variety	(56-60)
Q	Q Fever	(61-65)
R	Regional Enteritis	(66-68)
S	Sarcoidosis	(1, 3, 69, 70)
T	Treponema Pallidum Infection (Syphilis)	(71-74)
U	Ultrafiltration (Dialysis)	(75)
V	Vasculitis of Sarcoidosis	(76-78)
W	Wegener's Granulomatosis (GPA)	(79-81)
X	Histiocytosis-X	(82)
Y	Yaws	(83, 84)
Z	Zirconium exposure	(85-87)

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Appendix 1

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