#### Case Report

# A CASE OF AN OLD AGE POSTMENOPAUSAL WOMAN WITH A GIANT MYOMA UTERI

Gonca İmir, M.D. / Zehra N. Kavak, M.D. / Fatih Durmuşoğlu, M.D.

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, School of Medicine, Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey.

#### **ABSTRACT**

We report here, the case of an old age postmenopausal woman with a giant myoma uteri.

Ultrasonographic features, clinical presentations, differential diagnosis and treatment modalities of this rare case are presented and discussed.

Key Words: Leiomyoma uteri, Menopause

#### INTRODUCTION

Uterine leiomyomatas are benign tumors that consist of smooth muscle and connective tissue (2). It is estimated that leiomyomatas are present in 20 % of women over 35 years of age. Since leiomyomas are estrogen dependent, the occurrence of large myoma uteri in late postmenopausal years is unusual and should be evaluated carefully for underlying malignancy (1,2). We report here the case of an old age postmenopausal woman with a giant myoma uteri. Ultrasonographic features, clinical differential presentations. diagnosis and treatment of this rare case are presented.

#### **CASE REPORT**

A 60-year-old woman gravida 7 para 4 was referred to the gynecologic outpatient clinic of our hospital complaining of postmenopausal vaginal spotting, urinary frequency and abdominal distention. She was postmenopausal for 10 years without any estrogen replacement therapy. She had had postmenopausal vaginal spotting 5 months before and another spotting 2 months later. During her reproductive period, she had had regular menstrual cycles 28 / 4 days. She had never had surgery. Her physical examination was normal and her gynecologic examination revealed a hypertrophic cervix and an abdominal mass at the level of the umbilicus. Detailed transabdominal ultrasound imaging revealed a solid-cystic mass, measuring 20x25 cm in diameter seemingly related to the low segment of the uterus. Irregular sonolucent areas were seen within the tumor and considered as a possible myoma uteri with cystic degeneration. During imaging, the uterus and the ovaries could not be visualised definitely. Since a tumor of such size in a postmenopausal woman indicates early surgery, a laparotomy was considered for definitive surgery after evaluation. During laparotomy, we explored a solid-cystic mass, measuring 20x22x25 cm in diameter just below the anterior abdominal wall. The mass had

adhesions with bladder anteriorly and some segments of colon posteriorly. After the liberation of adhesions, we ascertained that the mass bulged outward from the low segment of the anterior region of the uterus into the left broad ligament and had a pedincule of more than 5 cm in length. With the parietal periton on it, the mass had pushed the bladder upward to the uterus fundus. In the first step, the pedincule of the cystic mass was clamped, divided and ligated (Fig.1). A frozen section of the tumor evaluated in our hospital's pathology laboratories confirmed leiomyoma uteri. No malignancy was reported (Fig.2). The uterus was multiple myomatous and as a pregnant uterus of 12 weeks gestation. Total abdominal hysterectomy and bilateral salpingoopherectomy was performed.

#### DISCUSSION

Uterine leiomyomata is a major public health and women's health care problem. Myomas are estimated to be presented in 20 % of reproductive age women, indicating that they are one of the most common human neoplasms (2). Malignant transformation to leiomyosarcoma is estimated to occur in less than 0,5 % of myomas and malignancy cannot be ruled out in an enlarged pelvic mass. This is one of the reasons frequently cited for the necessity for surgical intervention in asymptomatic woman with enlarged uterus (1,3). When a woman with an enlarged pelvic mass is examined, the major concern for both the physician and the patient is that the mass is a malignancy arising from the reproductive tract. During the evaluation of the



Fig. 1: The mass is clamped, divided and ligated.

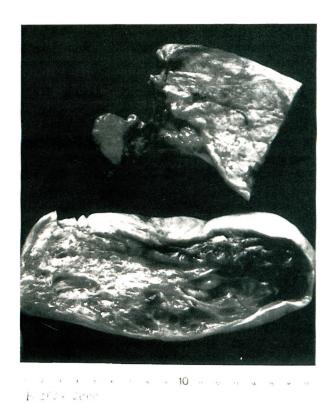
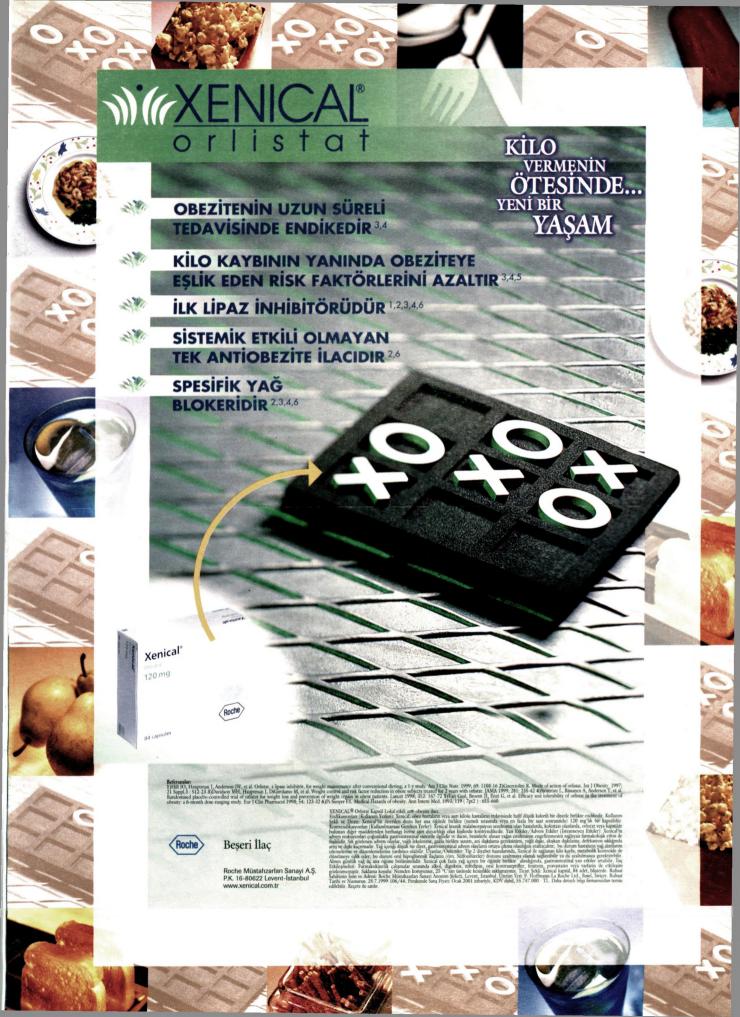


Fig.2: Pathologic specimen of the mass.

enlarged pelvic mass, the uterus and the ovaries are examined ultrasonographically and appear normal. The overwhelming likelihood is that the uterine enlargement is caused by a benign condition such as a myomata or adenomyosis (3). Excessive bleeding from myomas is one of the most common indications for hysterectomy in U.S.A. (4). Fortunately these neoplasms usually shrink after menopause, especially in patients not receiving high doses of exogenous estrogen stimulation. It appears that, most of these benign neoplasms are somewhat estrogen dependent (1).

The typical sonographic appearance of leiomyomata consists of mildly to moderately echogenic intrauterine masses that cause nodular distortion of the uterine outline. The solid nature of fibroids may often cause an indentation on the bladder or rectum (4). Irregular sonolucent areas may be seen within leiomyomata if cystic degeneration has occurred. Degeneration, infarction and infection can occur in these lesions and these complications are all associated with considerable lower abdominal pain (5).





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[1], R.C.A. Haintz, seven years worldwide experience, VII Eular Symposium, Istanbul, Turkey 8-11 June 1994.



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Sarcomatous elements associated with myomas occur less than 0.1 % of the time and are most often recognized postoperatively (4). Symptoms of associated sarcomatous elements include a enlarging pelvic mass. accompained by pain and tenderness (2). It should be remembered that an enlargement of the uterus in the postmenopausal patient is rarely caused by fibroids, particularly if the enlargement develops in a short time (rapid growth). The most probable diagnosis is sarcoma and physicians must prepare to perform surgery even if the D&C is negative (6). We also suspected malignancy in the patient before the decision to perform surgery. Other conditions that can cause enlargement of the uterus are adenomyosis and endometrial carsinoma. Endometrial carsinoma can enlarge the uterus to as much as four times normal size (1). Calcific degeneration within leiomyoma is quite common and can be recognized as clusters of high level echoes associated with distal acoustical shadowing (4). Since myomas should regress after menopause, serial sonograms can objectively document enlargement or regression of leiomyomata in the older woman (4.7). Occasionally, solid masses that are adjacent to the uterus appear as masses within the uterine contour. This finding has been referred to as "the indefinite uterus sign". In this retrouterine mass may setting. misdiagnosed as an enlarged uterus (6). The most common solid masses to simulate the sonographic appearance of a myoma are the solid ovarian tumors. Metastases that settle and enlarge in the culdesac such as those associated with breast malignancies can also produce apparent enlargement of the uterine contour. They may also become pedinculated and produce adnexal masses indistinguishable from ovarian cancers on both ultrasound and physical examination (1,2,4).

The tendency of myomas to undergo degeneration causes them to stimulate malignant tumors even more closely. Although it is impossible to differentiate reliably between a fibroid and ovarian cancer either clinically or by ultrasound, the history is often very helpful. An enlarging mass in a postmenopausal women indicates early surgery (1,7).

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