

Case Report

LOCALIZED LANGERHANS' CELL HISTIOCYTOSIS OF THE CHEST TREATED SURGICALLY

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ABSTRACT

Langerhans' cell histiocytosis is characterized by a wide spectrum of clinical manifestations, depending on the localized or diffuse form of the disease. This report describes a 27-year-old male patient, a heavy smoker, who presented with a localized bone lesion in the anterior aspect of the right 9th rib. The cardinal symptom was pain in the right lower hemithorax, aggravated by respiratory movements, without any pulmonary or systemic manifestations. A CT scan of the thorax showed a lytic lesion of the right 9th rib. Lung parenchyma was normal. A bone scan showed increased uptake by the anterior aspect of the 9th rib, but no other abnormality. Surgical excision of the involved segment of the right 9th rib was performed. Histological examination of the operative sample showed the characteristic Langerhans' cells. The diagnosis of Langerhans' cell histiocytosis was confirmed by immunohistochemical stain of the bone tissue and detection of S-100 protein, which is considered diagnostic. During a 6-year follow-up period, the patient remained asymptomatic, without any

evidence of recurrence. Localized Langerhans' cell histiocytosis of the bone, if accessible as in our case, may be treated effectively by surgical excision.

Key Words: Langerhans' cells, Bone lytic lesion, S-100 protein

INTRODUCTION

Langerhans' cell histiocytosis (LCH) is characterized by the presence of granulomatous lesions, which contain the characteristic Langerhans' cells. The term histiocytosis emphasizes the important role of histiocytes in the pathogenesis, which initiate the granulomatous reaction in response to antigens (1).

The terms eosinophilic granuloma, Hand-Schuller-Christian disease and Letterer-Siwe disease are also used, depending on the localized or diffuse form of the disease.

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Endikasyonları: Osteo-artrit bulgu ve belirtilerinin giderilmesi, erişkinlerde romatoid artrit bulgu ve belirtilerinin giderilmesi, erişkinlerde akut ağrının giderilmesi, primer dismenore tedavisi.

Kontrendikasyonları: Bileşiminde bulunan maddelerden herhangi birine karşı aşırı duyarlı olduğu bilinenlerde kontrendikedir. Asetilsalisilik asit ya da diğer non-steroid anti-enflamatuvar ilaçları kullandıktan sonra astım, ürtiker ya da alerji benzeri reaksiyon görülen hastalarda kullanılmamalıdır.

Uyarılar/Önemli: Non-steroid anti-enflamatuvar ilaç (NSAE) tedavisi sırasında GIS'de kanama, ülser, hatta perforasyon görülebilir. Fatal gastro-intestinal olayların çoğunun yaşlarda ve düşüklerde görüldüğü bildirildiğinden, bu gruptaki hastalarda NSAE kullanırken dikkatli olunmalıdır. Öyküsünde iskemik kalp hastalığı bulunan kişilerde rofekoksib kullanılırken dikkatli olunmalıdır. NSAE kullananlarda, karaciğer enzim düzeylerinde yükselmeler görülebilir. Uzun süreli NSAE tedavileri sırasında renal papiller nekroz ve diğer böbrek hastalıkları görülebilir. Böbrek işlevleri bozulmuş olanlar, kalp yetersizliği, karaciğer yetersizliği bulunanlar, diüretik ve ADE inhibitörleri ilaç kullananlar ve yaşlarda risk daha yüksektir. Ağır dehidrate hastalarda rofekoksib tedavisine başlarken dikkatli olunmalıdır. Sıvı retansiyonu, hipertansiyon ya da kalp yetersizliği bulunanlarda rofekoksib tedavisine düşük dozlarda başlanmalı ve dikkatli olunmalıdır. Rofekoksib ile tedavi edilen hastalarda kardiyovasküler trombotik olaylar (ani ölüm, miyokard enfarktüsü, stabil olmayan angina, iskemik inme, geçici iskemik atak) görülebilir. Rofekoksib tedavisi uygulanan hastalarda bazen anemi görülebilir. Rofekoksibin 18 yaşından küçük hastalardaki güvenirliliği araştırılmamıştır.

Gebelik kategorisi: C
Rofekoksibin insanlarda anne sütüne geçip geçmediği bilinmemektedir.

Yan Etkiler/Arzular Etkiler: Osteo-artrit çalışmada, rofekoksib tedavisine bağlı olup olmadığına bakılmaksızın, gözlemlendi bildirilen yan etkiler şunlardır: Tüm vücut: Kramptir, yorgunluk, baş dönmesi, grip benzeri hastalık, alt ekstremitelerde ödem, üst solunum yolu enfeksiyonu, ateş, sıvı retansiyonu, sıcak basması, alerji, aşırı duyarlılık, iştah değişikliği, uykusuzluk. Kardiyovasküler sistem: Hipertansiyon, çarpıntı, taşikardi. Sindirim sistemi: Diyare, dispepsi, epigastrik rahatsızlık, gastro-özofajiyal reflü, bulantı, konstipasyon, kusma. Kulak, burun, boğaz: Sinüzit, boğaz kuruluğu. Kas-iskelet sistemi: Sirt ağrısı. Sinir sistemi: Baş ağrısı. Solunum sistemi: Bronşit. Ürogenital sistem: Üriner enfeksiyon.

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ADE inhibitörleri, Asetilsalisilik asit, Furosemid, Litium, Metotreksat, Ritampisin, Teofilin, Varfarin ile etkileşim söz konusu olabilir.

Kullanım Şekli ve Dozları

Ecrox, oral yoldan aç ya da tok karına kullanılır. Her hasta, mümkün olan en düşük etkili doz kullanılmaktadır. **Osteo-artrit:** Tedaviye günde bir kez 12,5 mg ile başlanmalı önerilir. Bazı hastalarda dozun günde bir kez 25 mg'a yükseltilmesi ile ek yarar elde edilebilir. **Önerilen en yüksek günlük doz 25 mg'dır.** **Romatoid artrit:** Önerilen doz günde bir kez 25 mg'dır. **Önerilen en yüksek günlük doz 25 mg'dır.** **Akut ağrı ve primer dismenore:** Önerilen doz günde bir kez 50 mg'dır. **Önerilen en yüksek günlük doz 50 mg'dır.** Ağrı tedavisinde 5 günden uzun süreli kullanımı araştırılmamıştır. 50 mg'lık dozun kronik kullanımı önerilmaz. Yaşlı ve/veya orta karaciğer yetersizliği bulunan hastalarda tedaviye, önerilen en düşük doza başlanmalıdır. Ağrı böbrek yetersizliği olan hastalarda kullanımı önerilmemektedir. Ağrı karaciğer yetersizliği olan hastalarda kullanımına ilişkin yeterli veri yoktur.

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The purpose of this report is to describe a male patient who developed a localized form of LCH, with a solitary lesion in the anterior aspect of the 9th right rib, who was treated effectively with surgical excision of the involved rib without evidence of recurrence during a 6-year follow-up period.

CASE REPORT

A 27-year-old man, carpenter, presented with a 2-month history of boring, intense, persistent pain, localized in the anterior right side of the chest. The pain extended to the right upper quadrant, it was aggravated by respiratory movements and radiated posteriorly to the lumbar spine. There was no history of fever, weight loss, anorexia, sweating, cough, dyspnea, hemoptysis or other systemic manifestations.

Past medical history was significant in that he had undergone cholecystectomy for gallstones 5 years previously. The patient was a heavy smoker (1ppd for 8 years). There was no history of drug use, foreign travel or any exposure to chemicals or toxins.

Physical examination revealed tenderness and pain to pressure at the lower right costal area of the chest at the level of the 8th-9th rib. There was no peripheral lymphadenopathy, arthritis, jaundice, hepatomegaly or splenomegaly. Examination of the chest and heart was unremarkable. Abdomen was soft, non-tender, without palpable masses. System review was normal. Testicles were of normal size and consistency. There were no other symptoms of musculo-skeletal origin.

Laboratory tests

Hematocrit was 43,7 percent, hemoglobin 14,3 g/dl, white blood count 9,300/mm³ (70 percent neutrophils, 25 percent lymphocytes, 2 percent eosinophils, 1 percent monocytes and 2 percent basophils). Platelet count was 309,000/mm³. Erythrocyte sedimentation rate was 20 mm/hr and C-reactive protein 5,2 mg/l.

Microscopic examination of the urine for protein, hemoglobin, red blood cells, white blood cells, casts, crystals and microorganisms was negative. Blood glucose was 100 mg/dl, SGOT 18 U/l (normal range 8-40), SGPT 38 U/l (normal

range 8-40), total serum protein 7,2 g/dl, albumin 4,8 g/dl, globulin 3,4 g/dl, serum bilirubin 0,8 mg/dl, alkaline phosphatase 118 U/l (normal range 30-117), glutamyl transpeptidase 34 U/l (normal range 5-50 U/l), and serum calcium 9,5 mg/dl (normal range 9,0-10,5 mg/dl). Serum creatinine, urea, potassium, sodium and amylase were within normal range.

Diagnostic examinations

Electrocardiogram was normal. Radiograph of the chest showed clear lung fields, normal contour of the heart and no evidence of pleural fluid. The bony structure of the chest and particularly the anterior right costal area, where the pain was located did not show any obvious abnormality. Radiograph of the skull was normal.

Ultrasonography of the upper abdomen showed absence of gallbladder due to previous cholecystectomy, normal liver and biliary tract, pancreas and kidneys. Upper gastrointestinal endoscopy was normal.

CT scan of the chest showed a lytic lesion in the anterior aspect of the right 9th rib with an inflammatory reaction of the pleura (Fig. 1). A radioisotope bone scan with 99^m-technetium showed increased uptake by the anterior aspect of the right 9th rib, the area corresponding to the anatomic location of the lesion demonstrated by CT scan.

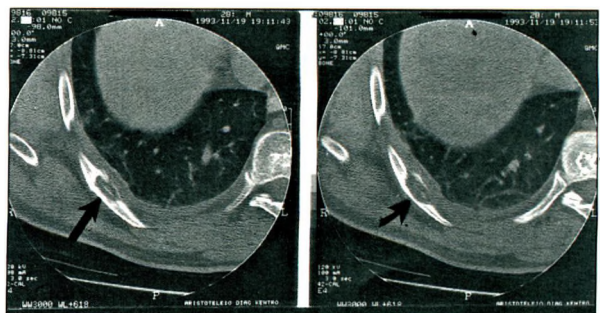


Fig. 1: CT scan of the thorax demonstrates a lytic lesion of the anterior aspect of the right 9th rib (arrow).

Clinical course

The patient was submitted for diagnostic thoracotomy. A 5,5 cm segment of the anterior aspect of the involved 9th right rib with an adjacent inflammatory mass was excised. The patient had an uneventful postoperative course and recovered fully.

Pathology

A decalcifying procedure of the surgical specimen of the excised rib segment was performed with 10% nitric acid before multiple paraffin embedded sections were processed for histology. A mixed cellular infiltrate of the connective tissue and the osseous part of the surgical specimen was observed. On hematoxylin-eosin stain the majority of the cell population was Langerhans' cells, eosinophils, neutrophils, giant cells and foamy histiocytes (Fig. 2). Langerhans' cells with the characteristic linear groove of the nuclei were identified (Fig. 3A).

The PAP-complex method was applied for immunohistochemical staining for detection on S-100 protein and lysozyme. Langerhans' cells were positive for S-100 protein (Fig. 3B) and negative for lysozyme. This finding is characteristic for the diagnosis of Langerhans' cell granulomatosis or eosinophilic granuloma (2,3).

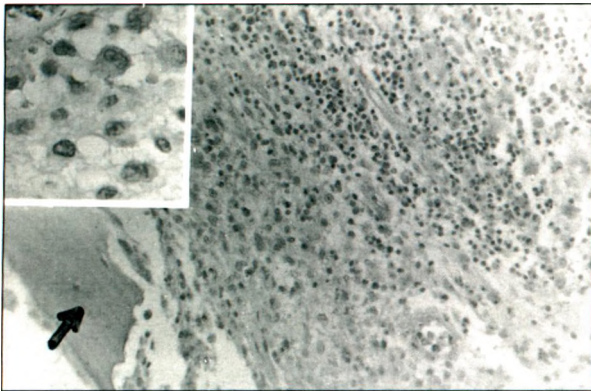


Fig. 2: Light microscopy shows mixed cellular infiltrate, consistent of Langerhans' cells, neutrophils, giant cells and foamy histiocytes. At the left lower part of the panel (arrow) osseous tissue is recognized (HE x 250). At the left upper panel (inset), Langerhans' cells are shown (HE x 250).

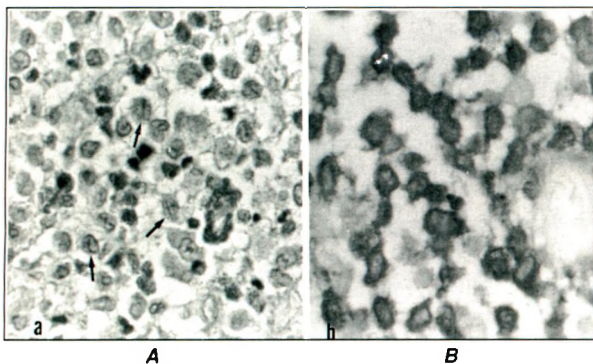


Fig. 3: **A.** Clusters of Langerhans' cells with characteristic linear groove of the nuclei (HE x 250).
B. Langerhans' cells positive for S-100 protein by immunoperoxidase stain (HE x 400).

DISCUSSION

The case presented is of interest for several reasons. First, it represents a case of Langerhans' cell histiocytosis (LCH) localized in the rib without any pulmonary or systemic involvement. Second, the diagnosis of LCH was confirmed by histological and immunohistochemical examination of the involved segment of the excised rib. Third, surgical treatment proved effective due to the localized nature of the disease and the accessible lesion for resection without any evidence of recurrence in the 6-year follow-up period.

The term Langerhans' cell histiocytosis emphasizes the role of Langerhans' cells in the initiation of the immune reaction and the granulomatous nature of the disease (4). The term includes the entities a) eosinophilic granuloma localized to one or more sites, usually bone and lung, b) Hand-Schuller-Christian disease with multiple bone involvement and c) Letterer-Siwe disease, with diffuse visceral and systemic manifestations.

Our patient represents the type of LCH, which is localized to one bone site, similar to eosinophilic granuloma. These clinical entities represent proliferation of the Langerhans' cells which derive from histiocytes. They are antigen modulators necessary for immune response. Langerhans' cells are present in the skin and other tissues and are related to dendritic cells of the T-zone of lymph nodes (5). However, they differ from these cells by the presence of characteristic cytoplasmic organelles, called Birbeck granules, seen on electron microscopy (6). Langerhans' cells are positive for S-100 protein on immunohistochemical stain (3) and express HLA-DR antigens (7).

Eosinophilic granuloma is the most common form of the disease, which usually affects young adults and is localized in the skull, ribs, mandible and long bones (7-9). It may also involve the lungs, skin, lymph nodes and buccal mucosa. It is the least severe form of Langerhans' cell granulomatosis characterized by lytic lesions in one or more bony sites.

The pulmonary form of LCH may manifest with respiratory symptoms (cough, dyspnea, pleuritic

pain), attacks of recurrent pneumothorax and diffuse pulmonary infiltrates on routine chest radiograph. Our patient presented with pain in the lower right hemithorax, aggravated by deep inspiration without any pulmonary or systemic manifestations. The finding of an osteolytic lesion in the 8th rib of the right hemithorax on CT scan raised the possibility of metastatic bone disease, osteomyelitis, or Ewing's sarcoma.

The diagnostic role of CT in establishing the diagnosis in patients with bone lesions is well recognized. CT shows soft tissue masses and lytic lesions of the bones.

More recently, magnetic resonance imaging has been used as a diagnostic examination for the assessment of lesions which raise the clinical suspicion of eosinophilic granuloma (10,11). The most common MRI manifestation of localized lesions is reaction of bone marrow and soft tissue due to edema, with low signal intensity on T2-weighted images. However, the MRI manifestations of eosinophilic granuloma, especially during the early stage of the disease, are not specific and may simulate other bone lesions, such as Ewing's sarcoma, osteomyelitis or benign bone tumors (osteoid osteoma or chondroblastoma). Fine needle aspiration and cytology has also been used for diagnosis (12,13). However, there are significant limitations in the interpretation of cytology and histological examination is required to establish the diagnosis. We selected to proceed with excision of the involved segment of the rib, which confirmed the diagnosis of Langerhans' cell granulomatosis and proved therapeutic.

The diagnostic and therapeutic dilemmas of the solitary Langerhans' cell histiocytosis or eosinophilic granuloma are outlined by Greis and Hankin (14). Solitary bone lesions respond well to excision, curettage and radiation, provided that bone involvement is not a manifestation of systemic disease. Surgical excision provides excellent results, as was the case in our patient.

The prognosis of localized LCH is favorable. By contrast, lung involvement and pneumothorax are associated with poor prognosis. The natural history of pulmonary LCH varies. Patients with progressive pulmonary disease develop

persistent symptoms and progressive loss of pulmonary function due to fibrosis, bullous formation, recurrent pneumothorax, cor pulmonale and respiratory failure. A high incidence of pulmonary and other neoplasms has also been observed in patients with Langerhans' cell histiocytosis (15).

The patient described in our case had a history of heavy smoking (1ppd for 8 years). Cigarette smoking is strongly associated with LCH, especially in patients with pulmonary involvement and it is considered a significant risk factor. Smoking on a regular basis is a more important factor than total number of packs/year. Cigarette smoking causes hyperplasia of pulmonary neuroendocrine cells with bombesin-like immunoreactivity, which is associated with LCH (16). Bombesin-like peptides stimulate fibroblasts resulting in fibrosis and exert a chemotactic effect on monocytes and Langerhans' cells. It is likely that cigarette smoking is an important risk factor in the pathogenesis of eosinophilic granuloma through neuroendocrine cell hyperplasia and fibrogenesis.

Tobacco glycoprotein (TGP), isolated from cigarette smoke, is a potent immunostimulator with production of cytokines, which may cause histiocyte proliferation in the form of Langerhans' cell histiocytosis (17). The implication of smoking in the pathogenesis of LCH is related primarily to parenchymal lung disease, but the effect on localized disease cannot be excluded, as was the case in our patient. Discontinuation of smoking is imperative in the management of patients with LCH to prevent recurrences, although there are no prospective studies regarding the effect of cigarette cessation on the natural history of the disease.

Recently, cytokines have been implicated in the pathogenesis of LCH (5). IL-3, IL-7, granulocyte macrophage colony-stimulating factor (GM-CSF), lymphocyte regulatory cytokines IL-2, IL-4 and IL-10, inflammatory regulators IL-1 alpha and tumor necrosis factor alpha (TNF- α) are produced in large amounts. These cytokines may be involved in LCH features, such as fibrosis, necrosis and osteolysis. Further research in this area may shed more light in the clinical expression of the disease and possibly in the therapeutic management.

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