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Axillary schwannoma: A rare occurrence

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Abstract

Background: Schwannomas are benign tumors arising from schwann cells. Most of the schwannomas occur in the head and neck region and in the flexor aspect of the limbs.

Case presentation: Herein we present a case of a 19 year old male who presented with a swelling in his left axilla for 3-4 months it was painless and not associated with any neurological deficit on the upper limbs.

The mass was excised and sent for histopathological examination. The diagnosis was confirmed by histopathology examination as schwannoma.

Conclusion: Schwannoma are benign nerve tumors of the nerve sheath. Schwannoma is rare in the axillary region. Surgical excision gives the good prognosis.

Keywords: Axillary swelling, schwannoma

Introduction

Schwannomas are benign encapsulated perineural tumors arising from schwann cells of nerve sheath of peripheral or cranial nerves.

About 25% of all schwannomas occur in the head and neck region.

They rarely occur in the axillary region.

We report here one such case of axillary schwannoma which is rare and unusual in its site of occurrences.

Case Report: A 19 year old male patient presented to Government Hospital with swelling in the left axilla since 3-4 months, not associated with any pain or tingling sensation.



Fig 1: Site of axillary swelling

On examination solitary firm swelling of 4X3cm in its greatest dimension was situated in the left axilla.

Lymph nodes were not palpable.

There were no neurological deficits detected in the left upper limb.

All hematological investigations were within normal limits.

The patient underwent excision of the tumor that was found to be situated beneath the brachial plexus.

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The patient did not have any neurological deficit after the procedure, except for the pain in the axilla. The patient was called for follow up after 1 month without any neurological deficit. Histopathological examination (HPE) showed encapsulated lesion.



Fig 2: Excised axillary swelling, nodular encapsulated mass measuring 4.0X3.0 cm, gross specimen and cut surface

Consisting of proliferating fibroblasts with scanty collagen and organoid arrangement of cells at places without cellular atypia, suggestive of schwannoma.

Discussion

Schwannoma (Neurilemmoma) is a benign tumor arising from schwann cells.

Schwannomas most commonly affect people between the ages of 50 and 60 years, affecting both sexes equally, they rarely occur in children schwannomas are rare.

Schwannoma is a slow growing solitary firm, well circumscribed and encapsulated round or ovoid tumor.

The presence of large tumors as well as rare cases of multiple neoplasms has been reported.

An extracranial schwannoma may present as a solitary swelling anywhere in the body, the most common sites being the head and neck, flexor surfaces of the upper and lower limbs, posterior mediastinum in the thorax and on the trunk.

However a schwannoma in the axilla is of unusual occurrence.

Thus on account of their rare occurrence and involvement of unusual sites they pose a significant challenge to diagnosis and treatment.

Biopsy for HPE is an important tool for diagnosis.

On HPE schwannomas are found to contain a varying proportion of two different areas.

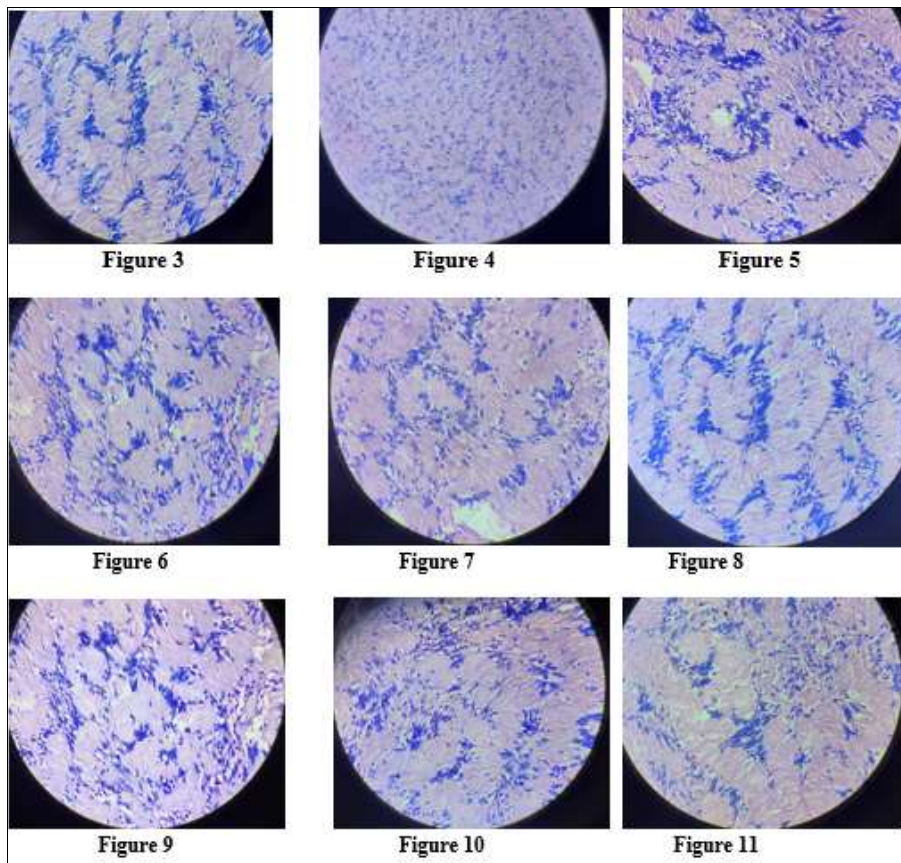


Fig 3-11: Histopathology, the H&E stained sections show Antoni A and Antoni B areas, with nuclear palisading, anuclear zone and Verocay bodies.

Antoni type A areas are highly cellular and contain closely packed spindle shaped cells forming palisades called verocay bodies. Antoni type B areas are composed of loosely arranged

spindle shaped cells in a mucinous matrix the first choice of treatment for schwannoma is surgical excision of the tumor while sparing the nerve trunk to avoid neurological deficits.

Conclusion

We have presented a rare case of axillary schwannoma. They pose a significant challenge to diagnosis on account of their rare occurrence in unusual sites.

Because of the non-specific symptoms many cases can simply be missed and misdiagnosed.

Hence a clinician has to bear in mind the possibility of a schwannoma in patients presenting with a swelling in the axilla.

Surgical excision of these tumors is associated with good prognosis.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

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