Pulmonary pleomorphic carcinoma metastasizing to the anterior mandibular gingiva: A case report and literature review

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ARTICLE INFO
Keywords:
- Pulmonary pleomorphic carcinoma (PPC)
- Metastatic tumor in oral region
- Mandibular gingiva
- Case report

ABSTRACT
Introduction and importance: Pulmonary pleomorphic carcinoma (PPC) is a rare subtype of non-small cell lung cancer. No standard therapy has been established for advanced disease, which results in poor prognosis. Some cases of PPC metastasizing to mandibular gingiva have been reported, and the involved site in these reports is all unilateral mandible.

Case presentation: We report a case of PPC metastasizing to the anterior mandibular gingiva in a 68-year-old man. The patient was referred to our hospital with tumor bleeding and difficulty with intake. One month before, he had been diagnosed as PPC. The size of oral tumor was 28 × 25 mm, and we performed surgical resection. Although there was no recurrence of oral lesion, he died of systemic metastases after 3 months since the surgery.

Clinical discussion: The prognosis of patients with metastatic tumor in oral region is poor. Radical treatment for oral lesion is often difficult due to the existence of other metastasis or the refractory, in particular cases with high grade malignancies such as PPC. On the other hand, because of the development of cancer treatment and the increase in future, the tumor metastases to the oral cavity should be performed.

Conclusion: PPC metastasizing to the gingiva of mandibular symphysis is extremely rare. If there are possibilities to improve the prognosis or quality of life, radical or palliative treatment for metastatic tumor in oral region should be performed.

1. Introduction

Pulmonary pleomorphic carcinoma (PPC) is a rare and highly malignant tumor. Because of the refractory cancer, the median survival time is 8–19 months and 5-year survival rate is about 10% [1–3]. Some cases of metastasis of PPC to the oral region have been reported in Japan. According to these reports, the gingiva was the most common metastatic site in the oral cavity similar to Hirshberg's paper. Metastases to the oral region are representing nearly 1–3% of all oral malignancies [2]. The lung is the most common primary site for tumors metastasizing to the oral soft tissues [4]. The period from gingival metastasis of PPC to death was about a few months [5]. Here we show a rare case of PPC metastasizing to the anterior mandibular gingiva with some literature considerations. Pulmonary pleomorphic carcinoma (PPC) is one of the histological subtype of pulmonary carcinoma and extremely rare, 0.1–0.4% of all pulmonary carcinoma. PPC is highly malignant, with an intermediate survival time of 10–12 months and a 5-year survival rate of about 10%. Moreover, only a few cases of metastases to oral cavity from PPC have been reported so far [5–13]. Although, clinical symptoms of tumor metastases to the oral cavity include pain and tumor, bleeding due to ulceration, it is often diagnosed periodontal diseases or mucosal diseases. Therefore, when metastasis to the oral cavity is diagnosed, the metastasis has already occurred and prognosis is very poor. Here, we present the case of PPC metastasizing to the mandibular gingiva with some literature considerations based on surgical case report (SCARE) 2020 guideline [14].

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https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijscr.2022.107499
Received 31 May 2022; Received in revised form 5 August 2022; Accepted 6 August 2022
Available online 11 August 2022
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2. Presentation of case

A 68-year-old man visited Tohoku university hospital because of the bleeding from the mass in his mandibular symphysis and difficulty intake. He was referred by his dentist to our hospital with a suspected neoplasm of mandibular gingiva. Other past medical history was hypertension, diabetes mellitus, gallbladder lithiasis, and gastro esophageal reflux disease. There was no specific family history of malignancy and psychosocial history. He had a smoking history adding up to 48 years and still smokes about 10 cigarettes per day and no drinking history. The performance status was bad. His drug history was analgesic, antihypertensive drug, hypoglycemic drug and antibiotics. The clinical progress up to our consultation was as follows. He coughed and blood sputum that continued for approximately 1 month. After that, he presented the department of respiratory in the neighbor hospital. The chest enhanced computed tomography and a tissue biopsy, which was performed by bronchoscopy suggested the diagnosis of sarcomatous carcinoma. The stage of pulmonary carcinoma was pT4N0M1 (stage IVA).

The results of examination indicated that operation and chemotherapy against primary tumor in all body, not just the lungs, was needed. For this reason, the patient was admitted to our hospital on the end of period of primary tumor. Asoda et al. reported that 50 % of carcinoma cells were labeled with Ki-67 [Fig. 5]. These findings disclosed that the tumor of the mandibular symphysis was histopathologically identical to that of the pulmonary lesion. Based on the results, the oral tumor was diagnosed as metastasis of PPC to the anterior mandibular gingiva.

Preoperatively, analgesics were used to control pain due to tumor growth and surgical splints were made for tumor bleeding. A tumor resection combined with marginal resection of mandibular bone for pain relief and hemostasis was performed by our surgical team under local anesthesia with intravenous sedation with propofol. After that, patient was able to be discharged three weeks after good post-operative course, and to intake. Moreover, there had been no recurrence. However, after 3 months since the surgery, he died of multiple organ failure caused by systemic metastases.

3. Discussion

PPC is a new histocytological type of lung cancer and a poorly differentiated NSCC, namely a squamous cell carcinoma, adenocarcinoma, or undifferentiated NSCC that contains >10 % spindle and/or giant cells or carcinoma consisting only of spindle or giant cells [3,15,16]. It is necessary to discriminate PPC from sarcoma or carcinomasarcoma, because PPC is consisted of epithelial tumor components histologically. Primary PPC is a rare neoplasm, which accounting for 0.1–0.3 % of all lung cancer and said to be with an average age of 65 at initial diagnosis [2,3].

The prognosis of metastasis oral tumor is very poor, which is observed end of period of primary tumor. Asoda et al. reported that multiple metastases to all body accounted for 79.6 % of patient metastases to oral cavity [4]. As for metastatic oral tumor, metastatic lesions of PPC tend to be detected before the primary tumor has been identified. Also, a previous study reported that the discovery of tumor in advanced stages more often than in early stages because the clinical symptoms of metastatic tumor in oral cavity, for example, pain, bleeding, dysfunction, neuropathy, eating disorder, bad smell, and airway stenosis are present with the increase of the growth of tumor [6]. Furthermore, metastasis in oral cavity is not found in many cases because patients are died owing to tumor before clinical symptoms are present. In the present case, the growing mass with bleeding on mandibular gingiva was recognized at the first presentation after primary tumor was diagnosed.

Since progression of metastatic oral tumor leads to impair patient’s quality of life (QOL), it is important for examination of oral cavity, which is one of the detections of all body. Not only oral care but also examination of oral cavity regularly for patient received chemotherapy or radiotherapy against primary tumor in all body, not just the lungs contribute to early detection of metastasis to oral cavity. In the future,
the cooperation with medical and dental will be more important.

Regarding with treatment, chemotherapy and radiotherapy is not effective for cancer and at the moment, complete resection of tumor is the first choice [17]. On the other hands, another study has reported that surgery in early stage operable PPC and chemotherapy after operation has proven to be the greatest overall survival benefit [18]. For example, gemcitabine plus cisplatin (GP) and gemcitabine plus carboplatin (GC) therapies are effective in the treatment of PPC [19]. The treatment of metastatic tumor in oral cavity is often focused on improvement of patient's QOL, instead of aim of curing the tumor. Previous reports demonstrated that radiotherapy for metastatic tumor in oral cavity is complete response [6]. There are some adaptations to surgical treatment for metastatic tumor in oral cavity. One of the adaptations to surgical treatment is the difficulty of oral ingestion. In the present case, the patient couldn’t take a meal through the oral cavity due to the growth of metastatic tumor. We performed the tumor resection in order to enable to be patient’s oral ingestion, not to complete cure of metastatic tumor in oral cavity. Before treatment of oral cavity, it is necessary to consider patient's general condition and whether primary tumor is under the good control or not. Physician should keep in mind that dissemination of

Fig. 3. Axial (A) and sagittal (B) computed tomography slices taken on pre-operation. Initial chest computed tomography (C).

Fig. 4. 18-F FDG positron emission tomography revealed the metastatic lesion in oral cavity and primary lung tumor with intense FDG uptake (yellow arrowhead and red arrow.) (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)
tumor cells because of tumor resection is some possibility of bringing about worsening of medical condition.

To the best of our knowledge, all cases of metastasis of PPC in oral cavity reported between 1999 and 2014 were from Japan, totaling 10 cases including the present case (Table 1) [5–13]. These cases show this disease is common in men (8/10 cases), and the metastasis site in oral cavity was posterior teeth gingiva except for the present case. Any one treatment of operation, chemotherapy, radiotherapy was conducted in the primary pulmonary tumor in almost all cases, on the other hand the metastasis site in oral cavity were often untreated. In the future, the number of cases, which is diagnosed PPC is expected to increase with recent changes in WHO classification. Accordingly, the number of cases related to the metastasis site in oral cavity will be increase. The existence of metastasis in oral cavity is rarely found in the period of treating the primary tumor. The clinical symptoms of metastatic tumor in oral cavity appear in advanced stages. The physician should check the symptoms of oral cavity, one of the clinical examinations and detailed screening at the first presentation.

4. Conclusion

PPC is a rare neoplasm of all lung cancer. Moreover, the existence of metastasis in oral cavity, especially in anterior teeth gingiva is rarely found in the period of treating the primary tumor. The clinical symptoms of metastatic tumor in oral cavity appear in advanced stages. Early detection of metastasis in oral cavity leads the appropriate treatment and the improvement of patient’s QOL.

Source of funding

Nothing particular.

Ethical approval

The report of current case is reviewed and approved by the Ethical Committee at our hospital.

Consent

Written informed consent was obtained from the patient for publication of this case report and accompanying images. A copy of the written consent is available for review by the Editor-in-Chief of this journal on request.

Author contribution

TK: Data analysis, Manuscript Writing.
HM: Corresponding author, main surgeon of the patient and Manuscript Writing.
JK: Data analysis, Patient’s follow-up.
AK, HK: Pathological analysis of data.
TT: Data analysis, Manuscript Writing.

Table 1

| Author          | Year | Age (y) | Gender | Location | Time to death (m) | Symptom | Treatment | Metastatic sites other than gingiva |
|-----------------|------|---------|--------|----------|-------------------|---------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Tanaka et al.   | 1999 | 71      | M      | Rt       | 2                 | Mass    | R         | R | Brain, adrenal gland |
| Minami et al.   | 2002 | 51      | F      | Lt       | 3                 | Swelling | S, C, R | None |
| Ishibashi et al.| 2005 | 71      | M      | Rt       | 1.5               | Mass    | None      | S | Stomach, ileum |
| Tachibana et al.| 2005 | 66      | M      | Lt       | 1                 | Ulcer   | None      | S, C, R | None |
| Sakamoto et al. | 2007 | 54      | M      | Rt       | 3                 | Mass    | None      | S, C | Brain, pancreas, skin, muscle |
| Tomita et al.   | 2011 | 68      | M      | Rt       | 3                 | Mass    | None      | C | None |
| Sudo et al.     | 2013 | 60's    | M      | Rt       | 12                | Mass    | S, S      | S | Small intestine, duodenum |
| Nagata et al.   | 2013 | 83      | F      | Rt       | 2                 | Mass    | C, R, S, R | Adrenal gland, liver, small intestine |
| Present case    | 2015 | 68      | M      | Ant      | 3                 | Mass    | S         | None | Right adrenal gland, liver, small intestine |

(Rt) Right, (Lt) Left, (Ant) Anterior, (R) Radiation, (C) Chemotherapy, (S) Surgery.
Registration of research studies
This case report was written in accordance to Helsinki guidelines.

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Declaration of competing interest
No declaration of interest.

Acknowledgement
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This case report was written in accordance to Helsinki guidelines.

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