A rare location for a common bone tumor, meta-diaphyseal giant cell tumor of bone in an adult patient

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Abstract

Primary bone tumors can be either benign or malignant considering their natural history and cellular morphology. Benign bone tumors are much more frequent than malignant ones although some of them like giant cell tumor of bone can behave just like a malignant one that means has the capacity for massive local destruction and remote metastasis. Giant cell tumor of bone in adult people has a very strong and diagnostic predilection for epiphyseal location in long bones. Very few cases have been so far reported for a giant cell tumor of bone with non-epiphyseal location in a long bone.

Introduction

Giant cell tumor of bone is a primary benign bone neoplasm that includes 5% of all bone neoplasms.1,2 They typically occur in patients between the age of 20 and 40 years and there is a slight female predominance.1,3 Giant cell tumor of bone usually are solitary, however, 1% to 2% may be multicentric.2 The natural history of this lesion has been studied widely before and it has been well noticed that this tumor has a strong predilection for epiphyseal of long bones after closure of growth plate. In spine, the sacrococcygeal area and upper cervical spine is a common site for occurrence of this tumor.1 Although metaphyseal location is commonly encountered in young adults before closure of growth plate, this has been reported in only 2% of adult people.5 In the study performed in Mayo Clinic on 567 patients suffering from giant cell tumor of bone, they found just 6 patients with metaphyseal location from them only 2 were above 20 years of age.7 No patient in that study had diaphyseal or even meta-diaphyseal lesions.

Discussion and Conclusions

Giant cell tumor of bone is a common primary benign bone lesion with unknown origin.4 According to Enneking’s staging system it often presents as an active stage two lesions although transition to aggressive stage three is not unusual.2 The tumor has a strong predilection for epiphyseal location although in young ages also sometimes it can involve long bone only in the metaphysis of proximal parts.5,6 This tumor can extend beyond epiphysis in adults.

We are introducing an adult female patient that was referred to our clinic because of a destructive lesion of her left femur in the meta-diaphyseal location. Because of her age and pattern of the lesion she underwent an open incisional biopsy that the result was compatible with primary bone giant cell tumor. There was no other associated disease justifying the diagnosis.

Case Report

A 46 years old otherwise healthy female patient was referred to our clinic because of a bone lesion in her left femur. She noticed deep aching pain in her left thigh two months earlier. She denied any history of trauma or any febrile episode during that period. The patient was seen by different physicians and finally an orthopedic surgeon did order a plain X-ray that showed a destructive bone lesion in her left distal femur with a permeative pattern (Figure 1). Computed tomography (CT) scanning (Figure 2) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) (Figure 3) showed that the lesion was located in meta-diaphyseal area and it had eroded the anterior bone cortex of left femur, but there was no soft tissue extension by the lesion.

All laboratory data including CBC, blood calcium, Phosphorus and Alkaline-Phosphatase level was within normal limits. Serum parathyroid assay reported to be within normal range. All other staging studies including chest and abdomen CT scan and whole body bone scanning was negative for any other abnormal lesion. Because of her age and the pattern of the lesion, she underwent an open incisional biopsy. The result was compatible with primary giant cell tumor of bone (Figure 4).

Subsequently she underwent curettage and internal fixation with a side plate augmented with bone cement. She did recover uneventfully and so far with a follow-up of 24 months she is doing good and there is no local recurrence for the lesion detected.

Figure 1. X-ray show a destructive bone lesion in the left distal femur.

Figure 2. Computed tomography scan shows the lesion, located in meta-diaphyseal area.
before closure of growth plate this tumor can happen in metaphysis of long bones. Diaphysial location in adults rarely if ever been reported. Here we are presenting an adult female patient with a meta-diaphysial lesion of femur that the incisional biopsy confirmed the diagnosis of benign giant cell tumor of bone. All other laboratory and staging studies failed to show any other disease or hormonal imbalances. Patient underwent definitive surgery with wide curettage and internal fixation augmented with bone cement and there encountered no local recurrences in two year follow-up. 

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