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a monoclonal gammopathy. A bone marrow biopsy was negative for a hematologic malignancy. Computed tomography (CT) chest/abdomen/pelvis and positron emission tomography (PET) were notable for diffuse lymphadenopathy above and below the diaphragm with splenomegaly. An excisional biopsy of a left cervical node revealed nodal involvement by MCD with metastatic KS (Figure 2A, Figure 2B and Figure 2C). Blood work confirmed an HHV-8 level of > 10,000,000 copies/mL.

The patient was treated with liposomal doxorubicin and rituximab without a clinical response. Etoposide was added but without effect. Therapy was upgraded to cyclophosphamide, Adriamycin, vincristine, and prednisone (CHOP) with immediate resolution of symptoms. After completion of 6 planned cycles, a PET-CT confirmed a complete response and a repeat HHV-8 level was < 1000 copies/mL. Unfortunately, the patient then reported a rapidly progressive painful erythematous rash in both lower extremities. After several weeks of failing antibiotic therapy, a punch biopsy of the skin demonstrated disseminated KS and a repeat HHV-8 level was at > 14,000 copies/mL. Vinblastine was initiated with drastic improvement in his symptoms.

Castleman’s disease is a great mimicker of multiple illnesses due to its various manifestations. In this case, the plasma cells on the core biopsy misled providers to a diagnosis of myeloma. An initial excisional biopsy with careful pathologic review is required to properly capture the nodal architecture. This delay led to the aggressive widespread dissemination of the disease requiring a 5-drug regimen which is an uncommon approach in this disease. The disseminated KS, presenting as rapid painful rashes instead of singular purple skin lesions, also deceived the medical team. This case illuminates the diagnostic complexity of lymphadenopathy workup in HIV+ patients and highlights the importance of pursuing ample tissue in order to make an accurate and timely diagnosis.

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Compliance with Ethical Standards

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Conflict of Interest

Drs. Hu, Varga and Pilichowska have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Ethical approval

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

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