

Pericardial metastasis from Squamous Cell carcinoma of Tonsils

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Abstract

Malignant involvement of the pericardium is seen in 1-20 percent of autopsies in patient with cancer. The most common metastatic tumor involving the pericardium is lung cancer; others include breast and esophageal cancer, melanoma, lymphoma and leukemia. Presentation can vary as tamponade, heart failure, dysrhythmia, and even sudden death. Here we present a 53-year-old male with history of HIV on Biktarvy, HPV positive squamous cell carcinoma of the left tonsil s/p tonsillectomy and cisplatin chemoradiotherapy with no local recurrence who presented with dyspnea and found to have large pericardial effusion. Few months prior, he was admitted for tamponade, he received a pericardial window and the pericardial biopsy showed atypical cells, positive for p40. However, the number of atypical cells was not enough to confirm metastasis. Echo and cardiac catheterization at this time showed signs of constrictive pericarditis and a thickened pericardium. Patient subsequently received anterior pericardiectomy and biopsy confirmed tumor metastasis with strongly positive p16 and positive for high risk HPV. One dose of Taxol/Carboplatin was administered but the patient sustained toxicity with peripheral neuropathy, hence it was discontinued, and the patient made himself hospice care. He felt improved over the next few months and agreed to restart palliative chemotherapy with regimen of nabpaclitaxel and gemcitabine. Our patient was fortunate enough to identify the disease at an early stage and qualify as a surgical candidate, but overall prognosis is questionable due to extensive metastasis to pleura. The PET done after starting the chemotherapy showed a lesion on the thyroid but on further investigation it turned out to be benign. Although a rare occurrence, cardiac metastasis has a grim prognosis and should be kept in differentials. Our patient had a pericardial metastasis from the tonsillar squamous cell carcinoma, which is very atypical and was never reported in any prior literatures.