

Giant lipoma of the cervical-nuchal region

Sir,

Lipomas are the most common subcutaneous soft-tissue tumors of mesenchymal origin arising from the adipose tissue. They are frequently encountered in the back, shoulder and neck regions. Clinical features usually presented are asymptomatic, slow growing and painless mass.^[1] They are not invasive and recurrence is very rare following surgery. Giant lipomas in the cervical-nuchal region are rare thus requiring surgical excision for esthetic concerns, pain and limitation of neck motion, especially in the recumbent position.^[2] We report a case of giant lipoma of the cervical-nuchal region in a 38-year-old female patient, which was treated surgically.

A 38-year-old female patient came with a chief complaint of swelling over the back of the neck from past 4 years. Swelling was initially small and asymptomatic when noticed, which gradually increased to attain the present size of 12 cm × 9.5 cm in size. It was mobile and soft in consistency and skin over the swelling was normal on palpation. Patient was operated under general anesthesia in a prone position and the subcutaneous mass was excised [Figures 1-3]. Histopathological examination confirmed the clinical diagnosis of lipoma. There was no recurrence in the follow-up period over 1 year.

Only 13% of all lipomas are located in the head and neck region. Lipomas are most commonly encountered between the ages of 50 and 60. They are usually adherent to the adjacent muscle tissue and skin.^[1,2] The capsules are strongly attached to the underlying soft-tissue and bone. Resection may be difficult due to large size and adherence to the surrounding tissues. Approximately, 80% are in the form of



Figure 1: Clinical photograph showing extensive swelling over the neck

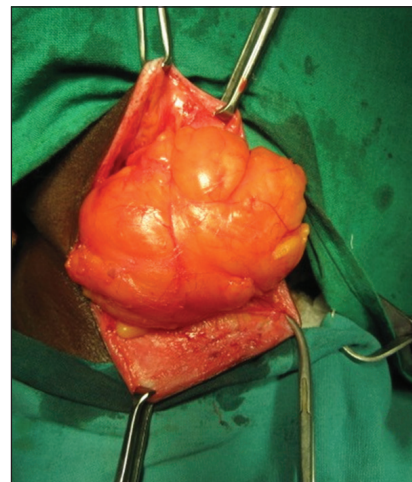


Figure 2: Intra-operative photograph showing exposure of the swelling



Figure 3: Excised specimen showing glistening encapsulated surface

a single lesion and they are typically seen in women.^[3] Owing to the specific location of these tumors, it is necessary to perform proper diagnostic tests to confirm and thus exclude possible communication with the spinal cord. Lipomas when presented with large (>10 cm) or rapidly growing masses, especially of the head and neck region, one should be concerned about a malignancy.^[3] The main diagnostic dilemma is to distinguish a lipoma from a liposarcoma.^[3,4] Giant cervical lipoma is rare, proper diagnosis and early surgical intervention is required to prevent complications.

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