

Unmasking Ancient Schwannomas: A Malignant Mimicry

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INTRODUCTION:

Schwannoma is the most common benign tumor arising from the neural sheaths of peripheral nerves. The term 'ancient' schwannoma is used to describe rare, long-standing tumors that have undergone degenerative changes, often mimicking its malignant counterpart, the malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumor.

REPORT:

A 74-year-old man who presented with a 50-year history of swelling in his right forearm. Recently, the swelling suddenly increased in size and began causing pain. Apart from this, there were no other constitutional symptoms. On examination, there was a 12 x 15cm immobile, firm mass on the flexor surface of the right distal forearm. The mass was tender, and dilated veins were observed on the overlying skin. Tinel sign was negative, and neurovascular status was intact.

The X-ray of the right forearm showed no significant abnormalities except for the presence of a soft tissue shadow. However, an MRI of the right forearm revealed a mass in the volar compartment arising from the median nerve. The lesion appeared heterogeneous with enhancement post-contrast. Histopathological examination following a close biopsy revealed the presence of Antoni A and B areas with Verocay bodies. Enucleation of the median nerve was performed, and the patient experienced transient numbness postoperatively.

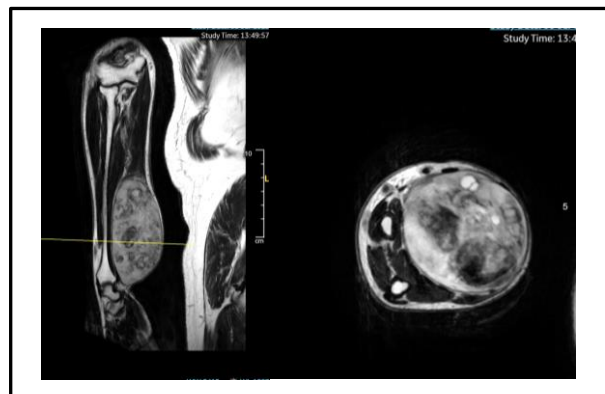


Figure 1: A well-circumscribed mass arising from the median nerve was observed on T2WI and appeared heterogeneous. No perilesional edema or infiltration into adjacent structures was observed. Although diffusion-weighted imaging was not available, its inclusion may aid in differentiating malignancy from degenerative changes.

CONCLUSION:

With an understanding of the characteristic history, imaging, and histopathological examination, clinicians can typically arrive at the correct diagnosis and avoid unnecessary sacrifice of the nerve.

REFERENCES:

1. Malizos K, Ioannou M, Kontogeorgakos V. Ancient schwannoma involving the median nerve: a case report and review of the literature. *Strategies Trauma Limb Reconstr.* 2013 Apr;8(1):63-6.