

Letter to Editor

Hidden Menace - The Quiet Growth of Retroperitoneal Tumours

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Letter to Editor

Liposarcoma is a soft tissue sarcoma, occurring most frequently in the limbs (52%) and the retro peritoneum (19%) [1]. In general, retroperitoneal tumours are uncommon, but among them liposarcoma is the variety most often detected. However, so-called “giants”, weighing in excess of 20 kg, are extremely rare [2,3].

In this respect, we report the case of a 68-year-old male patient attended at our hospital with low-grade fever of about 3 weeks’ evolution and unquantified weight loss.

An abdominal-thoracic CT scan revealed a ‘giant’ mass (Figure 1) occupying a large part of the right side and centre of the abdomen and pelvis. In the coronal plane it measured approximately 27 cm × 20 cm. The mass was heterogeneous, with some areas of contrast capture, some that were hypo dense and others that were fatty. Peripheral micro nodules indicative of metastasis were apparent in the lung. A biopsy, performed under radiological control, revealed sclerosing liposarcoma.

In view of the invasion of the mesentery root and the pancreatic body, together with the presence of distal lesions, the tumour was considered non-resectable and no longer responsive to any surgical approach. Therefore, palliative treatment was initiated.

Tumour growth in the retro peritoneum is slow, but due to the particularities of the retroperitoneal space this development may take place unnoticed, allowing the tumour to become very large.

In view of these considerations, we believe it of vital importance that the abdominal perimeter should be subjected to regular inspection, taking as a warning sign any progressive and unexplained increase in the abdominal perimeter. Accordingly, the population should be informed that in the event of a subjective, unjustified increase in abdominal contour, periodic measurements should be taken and if this progressive increase is confirmed, medical attention sought. Such precautions would forestall many of the cases of retroperitoneal tumours that are currently detected when it is too late for surgical remedy, possibly after years of silent growth, as in the case we present.

Keywords: Retroperitoneal tumors; Liposarcoma; Tumours

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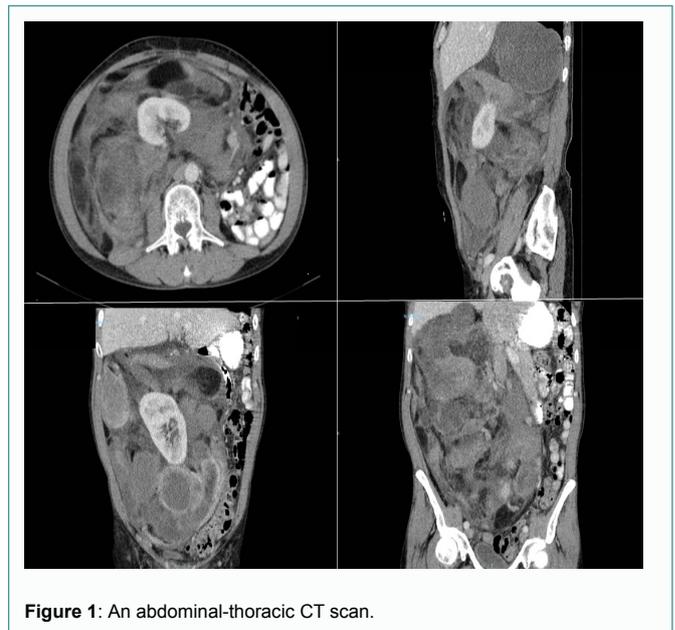


Figure 1: An abdominal-thoracic CT scan.

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