

Fibrolipoma in a Developing Community

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Abstract

The lipoma is defined as a tumor of fatty tissue, its usage being dated to 1830. The author recently drew attention to an interesting 1846 example. Here, the special type called 'fibrolipoma' is deemed worthy of documentation with special reference to its epidemiological parameters in the developing community inhabited by the Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria. It was concluded that the local data were comparable with those reported from several parts of the world.

Keywords: Tumor; Fat; Lipoma; Fibrolipoma; Igbos;

Introduction

The Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines "lipoma" as "a tumor of fatty tissue," adding that the word was first used in 1830 [1]. In this context, the author documented an interesting case dating back to 1846 [2]. Therefore, the present

paper deals with the special form whose self-explanatory name is "fibrolipoma." Indeed, as described by the famous dermatologist, Walter Lever, "Those containing a considerable proportion of connective tissue are called fibrolipoma." In particular, the epidemiological data were derived from the Igbos [3,4]. This Ethnic Group is domiciled in the South-Eastern Region of Nigeria.

Investigation

A Birmingham (UK) group concluded that the establishment of a histopathology data pool facilitates epidemiological analysis [5]. In this context, having trained at the celebrated Glasgow Western Infirmary in Scotland, the author became the pioneer pathologist in the Regional Pathology Laboratory at Enugu, the then Capital City [6]. My emphasis was on the submission of useful clinical details accompanying the biopsy specimens. The results have been analyzed as regards the fibrolipoma. See Table 1.

Table 1: Epidemiological data on lipoma

No	Initials	Age	Sex	Diagnosis	Site
1	NA	28	F	Tumor	Flank
2	OI	31	F	Ganglion	Wrist
3	OE	45	F	Onchocerca	Scapula
4	CI	23	M	Lipoma	Chest
5	OC	13	M	Teratoma	Sacrum
6	IN	46	F	Lipoma	Elbow
7	OC	50	M	Neoplasm	Scrotum
8	ND	45	F	Tumor	Back

Discussion

The lipoma is a common lesion found all over the body, the basic lesion being cutaneous. It may be limited or scattered all over the body as was described personally elsewhere [7].

However, it may present oddly. Thus, from Iran, there were 5 cases seen by the authors who also collected 40 cases from the literature, the title being "fibrolipomatosis." Likewise, from Saudi Arabia, the emphasis was on localized gigantism of a limb due to

"a disproportionate increase in the fibroadipose tissue." Perhaps, the oddest case reported long ago by Willis was in a 64-year-old man whose lesion measuring, 620 cm x 70 cm, arose in the scrotum and had to be carried in "a specially made hammock slung from the shoulders." [8,9,10].

The lipoma gains prominence in certain situations. For example, the endobronchial position led to pulmonary dysfunction (11,12). Likewise, that of the appendix culminated in torsion (13). There were also hidden intramuscular sites (14,15).

In this context, all the present series were superficial manifestations. Incidentally, the predominance of females bears witness to well known feminine adornment (16). The mean age of 35 years is in consonance with this trend.

Moreover, it is to be noted that the fibrolipoma per se is different from spindle cell fibroma. This particular type has been dealt with in the literature (17,18).

Conclusion

The fibrolipoma is a tumor of fat cells with intermingled fibrous element, all growing in benign order. Eight examples of it were documented among the Igbo ethnic group in a developing community in Nigeria. The epidemiological data were found to mellow with those of other parts of the world including superficial manifestation and predominance in females.

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