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A rare presentation of malignant melanoma with acute hepatic failure and multi-system organ failure

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Abstract

Background: Malignant melanoma is the 5th most common cancer in the UK, with case numbers almost quadrupling in the last 30 years. Whilst metastasis to the liver does occur, this rarely results in fulminant hepatic failure, with only a few cases reported in the literature.

Case: A 52-year-old man presented to A&E with jaundice, oliguria and abdominal pain. A diagnosis of possible cholecystitis was made and appropriate treatment was commenced. After 2 days of this therapy the patient's state had deteriorated with increasing abdominal pain, lethargy and vomiting. Blood tests showed severely deranged liver function tests with a high white cell count, raising the suspicion of ischaemia. Ultrasound and viral and antibody screens were normal. CT scan revealed hepatomegaly and ascites. His condition rapidly deteriorated and he passed away three days later. Post mortem examination revealed heavy infiltration of the liver, heart, lung, kidney and bladder by metastatic melanoma. It transpired that the patient was seen by his GP 10 days prior to his admission with a suspicious mole on his back and was referred to a Dermatologist. . Post mortem histology showed an ulcerated epithelioid malignant melanoma, which extended into subcutaneous fat. Breslow depth was 6.5 mm, with Clark level 5. There was widespread vascular invasion present, which may account for its aggressive nature.

Conclusion: This case illustrates the importance of considering the varying presentations of Melanoma in all specialties, and displays the key role of post mortem examination in identifying underlying pathology.

Biography

Soudeh Mashayekhi has completed her BSc in Management, from Imperial College Business School with first class honours in 2011. She is currently in her penultimate year of undergraduate medicine at Imperial College School of Medicine and is actively involved in a number of dermatology research projects and is interested in pursuing a career in dermatology.