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Primary Accessory Breast Carcinoma; Case Report and Review of the Literature

Erol Kilic[1]*, Hasan Gökçe[2], Mustafa Uğur[1], İbrahim YETİM[1], Muhyittin TEMİZ[1]
[1]General Surgery, Medicine Faculty, Mustafa Kemal University, Turkey
[2]Pathology, Medicine Faculty, İnönü University, Turkey

Case Report

***Corresponding author**
Erol Kilic

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Abstract: Primary ectopic breast carcinoma is a very rare and progressive cases, most commonly encountered in the advanced stage. Most of the cases develop from the ectopic breast tissue, and it may occur along the milk line within the area from the axilla to the external genital region. Ectopic breast tissue is observed in the 6% of the female population and is mostly encountered in the axilla. Clinically, the most frequently encountered type of Primary ectopic breast carcinoma is the one which originates from the ectopic breast tissue located in the axillary and it constitutes 70% of all Primary ectopic breast carcinomas. Histopathologically, the most common type is invasive ductal carcinoma (72%). Because of ectopic breast cancer is a very rare entity and is usually confused with other pathologies. Hence it is encountered in advanced stages. It should be taken into account that axilla-based masses may be ectopic breast tissue.

Keywords: primer ectopic breast carcinoma; ectopic breast tissue; axillary mass.

INTRODUCTION

Primary ectopic breast carcinoma (PEBC) is a very rare and progressive case most commonly encountered in the advanced stage. Most of the cases develop from the ectopic/ accessory breast tissue (EBT). Embryologically, EBT originates from ectoderm thickening and it may occur along the milk line within the area from the axilla to the external genital region. In this study we aimed to discuss the epidemiology, clinic and treatment of PEMC originating from the EBT in axilla, which is very rare and follows a progressive clinical course.

CASE PRESENTATION

The 56-year female patient reported that she had felt firmness in the right axilla. Physical examination revealed an about 3x4 cm palpable mass in the right axilla, causing the retraction of the skin. In the physical examination of both breasts were normal. In ultrasonography, 23x20 mm lesion in right axilla determined. Surgical resection implemented included loco-regional surgery. Histopathological study revealed an invasive ductal carcinoma, (ER+3, PR+3, c-erbB2 score: 1+. It was Grade 2 according to the Modified Bloom Richardson. There were 2 metastatic lymph nodes. Surgical margins were tumor negative. Postoperative tumor's stage were T1N1M0.

DISCUSSION

Ectopic breast tissue is most commonly encountered in the axilla, but can also be seen in the face, chest wall, posterior neck area, back, hips, flank area, vulva, femoral area, shoulders and upper extremities [1]. Clinically, the most frequently encountered type of PEBC is the one which originates from the EBT located in the axillary and it constitutes 70% of all PEBCs [2]. Histopathologically, the most common type is invasive ductal carcinoma (72%). Invasive lobular carcinoma and medullary carcinoma are less common (12%). Other carcinoma types constitute the remaining 16% [3]. In anamnesis, PEBC is defined as a progressive tumor with unilateral subcutaneous location, but having no relation with the local symptoms. Predisposing factors in primary breast carcinoma (PBC) such as familial history or exposure to radiation can also be effective in PEBC [4]. Clinically, partial/complete areola and nipple belonging to EBT can also be observed [4]. There was no nipple or areola in our case. Along with the two breasts and axillaries, bilateral supraclavicular fossa and bilateral laterocervical lymph nodes should also be examined in PEBC patients [5]. In case, carcinoma was originating from EBT in axilla and it's histopatological diagnosis was invasive ductal carcinoma. Mammography and ultrasound-guided fine needle aspiration (FNA) employed in the diagnosis of PEBC and also in the differential diagnosis of lipoma, lymphadenitis, metastatic carcinoma and the lesions such as hidradenitis suppurativa [1, 6]. G.Visconti et al. developed an algorithm which helps in the evaluation and differential diagnosis of the patients diagnosed with axillary mass in the physical examination. Since axillary cutaneous and subcutaneous tissues drain into the ipsilateral axillary and supraclavicular lymph nodes (LNs), the lymphatic drainage and metastasis of PEBC

develops towards the same areas [5]. Just as done in the PBC, tumor diameter and lymphatic involvement as well as the clinical signs are taken into consideration in staging the disease. Sentinel lymph node biopsy is still controversial for PEBC, and general approach for these patients is the complete removal of the whole axillary [6]. Although some authors argue that the LN involvement risk rate of PEBC is very high, some argue that it is similar to that of primary breast carcinoma [4, 7]. Due to the delay in diagnosis, PEBC exhibits lower prognosis than PBC [4]. Routiot T *et al*., argued that metastasis to LNs occurs earlier and more often in PEBC than in PBC [8]. Besides there is no specific treatment for PEBC in the literature, whether prophylactic excision of EBT prevents malignancy is also controversial [9]. In the surgical treatment of PEBC, most authors recommend the resection of the tumor tissue with the skin together and the dissection of the regional LNs [5, 9]. Accessory breast cancer is a progressive tumour, and long-term follow-up is required. A comprehensive treatment strategy may be an effective treatment option for patients; however, the optimal time at which to commence chemotherapy and the role of combined radiotherapy and endocrine therapy require additional investigation [10]. The primary goal in the treatment of PEBC is to perform Ro resection along with adjuvant therapy, if possible. Since LN involvement is very common in these patients, systemic therapy often becomes a necessity [8]. According to the classification of AJCC; stage I, II and IIIA-B patients should receive loco-regional surgery (Ro resection + axillary lymphadenectomy) and a radiotherapy following the hormonotherapy or chemotherapy [5]. Loco-regional surgical treatment has provided ≥10 years of cancer-free survival rates in patients both who received and who did not receive postoperative radiotherapy. Loco-regional approach (Ro local excision+ axillary dissection + radiotherapy) has been considered to be the most appropriate method in PEBC treatment and has been employed for 15 years [5]. In case, loco-regional surgical (Ro resection + axillary lymphadenectomy) treatment implemented. Patient, received adjuvant radiotheraphy, it's chemotherapy and hormonotheraphy on going. In the past, ipsilateral mastectomy was employed in PEBC treatment, but it is controversial. If there is no sign of tumor in the anatomical breast tissue, ipsilateral mastectomy should not be performed [8]. In our case did not implemented mastectomy. Radiotherapy should cover the areas of the tumor tissue, regional skin and regional LNs [8]. In the differential diagnosis of the masses causing chronic symptoms and signs, especially the ones observed in the axilla or along the milk line, PEBC should be considered, and clinical, radiological and histopathological examinations should be performed. If signs of malignancy are observed, in addition to preoperative staging, the liver and the skeletal system into which primary anatomical breast cancer has metastasized should also be evaluated. In surgical treatment, Ro resection including axillary LN dissection should be performed and adjuvant radiotherapy, chemotherapy/hormonal therapy should certainly be performed. If any pathological findings are detected in the ipsilateral breast tissue, mastectomy should be performed.

CONCLUSION

PEBC is often confused with other mass lesions that are located axillary and therefore diagnosed at advanced stages due to delayed diagnosis. Multidisciplinary treatment should be applied in the treatment of the disease as appropriate to histopathologic type and receptor findingsis often in advanced stage and should be followed multidisciplinary.

Informed Consent: Written informed consent was obtained from patients who participated in this study.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest between the authors. The financial support has not been taken.

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