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Pleural 'drop' metastasis 21 years after resection of a thymoma: A case report and review of the literature

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We present an unusual case of multiple pleural drop metastasis 21 years after complete resection of an encapsulated thymoma in a Southeast Asian man with myasthenia gravis (MG). To the best of our knowledge, this is the longest reported disease-free-interval of thymoma recurrence. A 43 year-old man with history of MG presented with a 9-month history of generalized weakness, fatigue and shortness of breath. After the initial diagnosis of MG 21 years ago, the patient underwent a complete resection of an encapsulated thymoma. His MG has reportedly been stable with cyclosporine, mycophenolate mofetil, and pyridostigmine. Due to his new symptoms, CT scan of the chest with contrast was done and revealed numerous pleural nodules surrounding the left lung with basilar predominance and pleural thickening. The findings were concerning for "drop metastases". CT-guided biopsy of a pleural nodule was done and the pathologic diagnosis was WHO type B1 thymoma. In the literature review, the average disease-free-interval for thymoma ranged from 68 to 86 months. Pleural and mediastinal recurrence are more common than distant hematogenous recurrence, although various presentations of thymoma recurrence have been reported. Adverse prognostic factors include an initial higher Masaoka stage, incomplete resection, elderly age, and pleural or pericardial involvement. In patients with apparent complete resection of a thymoma, clinicians should remain vigilant for the possibility of thymoma recurrence for up to 20 years after initial management. Greater awareness of the long disease-free-intervals and long-term follow-up with radiologic surveillance is recommended in these cases.

Biography

Chia-Chun Chiang is currently a neurology resident at Mayo Clinic in Arizona, USA. She received her MD degree from National Yang Ming University, Taipei, Taiwan in 2011, and completed a transitional year residency at Taipei Veterans General Hospital. She then worked as a Post-doctoral scholar at the Department of Neurosciences at University of California, San Diego, USA. She started her residency training at Mayo Clinic Arizona in 2014. He has published seven papers in reputed journals for her research in bio-photonics, neurosciences, clinical neurology and headache medicine. She has also presented at several international conferences in which she won Best Presentation Award and Best Paper Award.

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