

A rare case of finger metastasis showing as the first sign of lung cancer

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ABSTRACT

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CASE REPORT

An 82-year-old male was admitted to our hospital complained of dyspnea on exertion and left chest pain. three months prior to admission, he noticed swelling and pain of his left forefinger and middle finger. Before visiting to our hospital, patient consulted his primary care physician and was treated with antibiotics as trauma and infectious disease. But his finger pain continued, and then he gradually noticed dyspnea and left chest pain. When admitting to our hospital, the tip of his fingers showed erosive redness and bled easily by contact (Figure 1). X-ray showed irregular osteolytic change of distal phalanx of forefinger and middle finger (Figure 2). His serum CEA level was elevated, which was 7.6 ng/mL (normal range was less than 5.0 ng/mL), and thoracic CT scan showed left pleural effusion and pulmonary nodules (diameter was 2.1 cm, and military nodules was also recognized in the same lobe) of left lower lobe. Since oozing from his index finger did not stop and severe pain continued, his left index finger was finally amputated. The histopathological examination of his left forefinger revealed poorly differentiated adenocarcinoma, and the cytology of pleural fluid was also showed non-small cell carcinoma. CEA level of left exudative pleural fluid was 87.3 ng/mL. We diagnosed as his having primary lung cancer (T3, N2, M1b, stage IV), and finger metastasis.

Left pleural effusion was controlled by therapeutic thoracentesis. But since his performance status was poor, there was no indication for systemic chemotherapy. To relieve his dyspnea and pain, oxygen therapy and administration of opioid was continued. After four months, the patient died of disseminated disease and respiratory failure after the palliative therapy.



Figure 1: Left forefinger, which removed lateral-side of nail, showed erythematous swelling, and bled easily by contact.

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Received: 25 February 2015

Accepted: 21 March 2015

Published: 01 June 2015



Figure 2: X-ray of left forefinger and middle finger: Destruction of cortex and irregular osteolytic lesions of distal phalanx with left forefinger and middle finger were shown.

DISCUSSION

Bone metastasis, especially axial bone metastasis is common in advanced lung cancer patients [1, 2]. But finger metastasis, as the first sign of lung cancer is extremely rare, and the incidence of finger metastasis from primary tumors is approximately 0.1% [3–5]. According to the previous reports [1–5], the most cases are mortal within six months and are correlated with poor prognosis because of advanced staging. According to the previous report [5, 6], lung, kidney, breast, and gastrointestinal cancers are known as the primary lesions of acrometastasis to the hands, and 44% of them is lung cancer. It is difficult for primary care physician to suspect the possibility of finger metastasis rather than trauma and infectious diseases because of uncommon presentation of metastasis with redness, swelling, and pain of the finger tip [4, 5]. In many cases, performance status of the patients showed already got worse, when having the diagnosis of cancer. Therefore, the treatment is usually palliative, and radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and amputation are performed. In this case, severe pain and bleeding did not discontinued and his index finger was finally amputated.

CONCLUSION

A rare case of lung cancer that metastasized to fingers is presented. Finger metastasis is generally sign for poor prognosis, and palliative treatment is important to relive the symptom.

How to cite this article

Taooka Y, Takezawa G. A rare case of finger metastasis showing as the first sign of lung cancer. *Int J Case Rep Images* 2015;6(6):384–386.

doi:10.5348/ijcri-201520-CL-10075

Author Contributions

Yasuyuki Taooka – Substantial contributions to conception and design, Acquisition of data, Analysis and interpretation of data, Drafting the article, Revising it critically for important intellectual content, Final approval of the version to be published

Gen Takezawa – Analysis and interpretation of data, Revising it critically for important intellectual content, Final approval of the version to be published

Guarantor

The corresponding author is the guarantor of submission.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Article citation: Taooka Y, Takezawa G. A rare case of finger metastasis showing as the first sign of lung cancer. Int J Case Rep Images 2015;6(6):384–386.



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