Case Report

Nodular fasciitis of the face: a case report and review of the literature

Yuncheng Li¹,*, Yongguang Fei²,*, Lijun Zhu³, Guojun Li⁴,⁵, Huihui Li⁶

¹Department of Otorhinolaryngology, ²Center of Physical Examination, Union Hospital, Tongji Medical College, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, China; ³Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Renmin Hospital of Chibi, China; ⁴Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Guangdong General Hospital and Guangdong Academy of Medical Sciences, Guangzhou, China; Departments of ⁵Head and Neck Surgery, ⁶Epidemiology, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas, United States. *Equal contributors and co-first authors.

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Abstract: Objective: To report a case on facial nodular fasciitis and review the published literatures. Methods: A 12-year-old girl presented with a progressively enlarging subcutaneous nodule on the left cheek. Results: The nodule was surgically excised. Histologic examination revealed that the result was nodular fasciitis, a kind of pseudoneoplastic spindle cell tumor. Conclusions: Our current report is consistent with ones in literatures. Surgical excision may be likely the most appropriate treatment option.

Keywords: Nodular fasciitis, surgical excision

Introduction

Nodular fasciitis (NF) is characterized by self-limited, pseudosarcomatous reactive process composed of proliferating fibroblasts and myofibroblasts, and it occurs preferentially in the upper extremities and trunk [1]. It is probably of a reactive nature and occurs typically in the third to fifth decades of life without sexual predilection [2]. It usually forms a mass that could be confused with myofibromatosis due to their rapid growth. NF of the head and neck region is rarely found, particularly in children. In this study, we reported a case of a 12-year-old girl with nodular fasciitis of the face.

Case report

A 12-year-old Chinese girl was referred to us with a 20-day history of a progressively enlarging subcutaneous nodule on her left cheek. Physical examination found a non-tender, firm, immobile, and about 2 cm subcutaneous mass; and the surface was smooth without ulceration or vessels (Figure 1A). Ultrasound bio-microscopy indicated an oval hypoecho mass, at approximately 1.92×0.99×1.59 cm. Computed tomography (CT) revealed a well-defined, solid, and cystic mass on her left cheek. Differential diagnosis included atypical conjunctive intraepithelial neoplasia and fibrous histiocytoma. Intraoperatively, the mass seemed to arise from the posterior periostea which was firmly adherent (Figure 1B). Because of the anatomic position of the lesion and its volume, it occupied the entire thickness of the muscle. The lesion was entirely removed with full recovery without any complication and residual scar (Figure 1C). The facial nerve was not involved and the tumor was completely excised. One year later, there was no evidence of recurrence.

Histopathology

An excisional biopsy of the mass was performed with about 0.5 mm surgical margins of excision. Histopathologic report indicated that the plump spindle cells of proliferation with pale-staining oval nuclei and prominent nucleoli arranged in short and irregular fascicles and embedded within a pale myxoid stroma (Figure 2). Scattered extravasation red blood cells were visible. Additionally, we could observe the brisk mitotic activity of cells with no sign of necrosis.
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Discussion and literatures review

Konwaler et al. first reported NF was a pseudo-sarcomatous fibromatosis and designated it as stressed that the condition was benign in 1955 [3]. It has been reported that NF mostly occurs on the upper extremities (43%), followed by the trunk (25%) and lower extremities (22%), whereas about 10% of NF occurs on the face or neck [4]. Additionally, there have been only 9 cases of facial nodular fasciitis published in the literatures (Table 1) [5-8]. Although the exact etiology is still obscure, NF is postulated to be a reactive process in joint tissue exposed to repeated trauma or inflammation. It usually grows rapidly with or without inflammatory response. In the current case, we reported that the patient was first noticed with a nodule on her face (left cheek); and it progressively increased in size during the previous 1 month, with no episodes of pain and redness. Additionally, it has been indicated that trauma is one of causative factors, but there has been no report on any significant trauma for the majority of cases (including our patient).

Regarding histopathology, NF is a mass that forms proliferation of fibroblasts and mitotic activity, which may be easily misdiagnosed as malignant tumors of the same species soft tissue sarcomas such as leiomyosarcoma, fibrosarcoma, rhabdomyosarcoma and sarcomatoid [9, 10]. Although CT would contribute to determine the spread of the lesion, the results of images are non-specific, and some tumors might not be ruled out [11]. Ultrasonography may be considered, but the findings are also non-specific [8]. Berry et al. indicated that fine-needle aspiration biopsy (FNAB) could be used for accurate diagnosis of NF, refraining from surgical excision in the cases with a typical clinical feature [12]. Thus, a biopsy is necessary for the alternative methods of diagnosis. Meanwhile, surgical excision remains the optimal standard treatment for majority lesions. McClintic et al. reported that treatment of ocular nodular fasciitis was surgical excision [13]. Celentano et al. described that after a mandatory incisional biopsy, a 4 to 6-week period of follow-up could be considered because of the possibility of spontaneous regression of the lesion [14]. In addition, Grobmyer et al. investigated that once the diagnosis is confirmed, local excision or observation without operation could be appropriate [15].

Figure 1. A: Preoperative: The surface of the lesion with smooth without ulceration or vessels. B: Intraoperative: The mass arising from the posterior periosteum which is firmly adherent. C: Postoperative: Full recovery without any residual scar and complications.

Figure 2. Proliferation of plump spindle cells with pale-staining oval nuclei and prominent nucleoli (HE dyeing 100× Histopathologic slide).
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In the present case, after the surgical excision, our patient had full recovery without any complications with more than one year of follow-up. NF of the head and neck region rarely occurs, particularly in the face of children. In conclusion, we present the case of a 12-year old girl with a facial nodular fasciitis. Our current case highlights a rare entity after complete excision and needs no any repair for sufficient complete recovery of the face.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

None.

Abbreviations

NF, nodular fasciitis.

Address correspondence to: Huihui Li, The Center of Physical Examination, Union Hospital, Tongji Medical College, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, No. 1277 Jiefang Ave., Wuhan 430022, Hubei, China. Tel: 027-85726237; Fax: 02785726-237; E-mail: 11032248@qq.com

References


Table 1. Reported Cases of Facial Nodular Fasciitis in the literatures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reports</th>
<th>Trauma history</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Tissue Structures</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age (yr)</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kim [5]</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Spindle cell</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>3 months</td>
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<td>1 month</td>
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<td>Ren and Zhang [6]</td>
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<td>Ren and Zhang [6]</td>
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<td>Cheek</td>
<td>Spindle cell</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Reported Cases of Facial Nodular Fasciitis in the literatures