Rare presentation of Parapharyngeal schwannoma - “Dysphagia and obstructive sleep apnoea” and a novel approach.

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Abstract

Although it is rare parapharyngealschwannomas can present with Obstructive sleep apnoea and dysphagia, and in selected cases it can be removed endoscopically, with least morbidity.

Key words

parapharyngeal schwannoma, endoscopy, access

Introduction

The tumors of the parapharyngeal region account for only 0.5% of all the head and neck tumors. Interestingly schwannomas are much common in this region though its presentation in this form is rare. Here a case of schwannoma of parapharyngeal space in a male in late forties reported with an emphasis on surgical management

Background

Obstructive sleep apnea syndrome (OSAS) is always caused by anatomic abnormalities, including nasal cavity, pharynx, and neuromuscular dysfunctions, leading to airway narrowing. OSAS associated with a mass in the aero digestive tract is rare. MEDLINE reviews up to 2005 had found only 30 articles about OSAS caused by head-and-neck tumors (2).

Schwannoma in the head and neck causing OSAS is extremely rare; only three cases have been reported up to 2008[3]. The unique treatment modality selected here to address the problem via endoscopy assisted trans oral route despite its large size, minimizing the complications specific to surgical removal of tumors in PPS), made it special.

Figure 1 – CT coronal section of the lesion
Overlying mucosa was normal. A swelling was visible from postnasal space to epiglottis. The CT scan showed a mass of 6 cm × 7.5 cm in the parapharyngeal space extending from the skull base to greater horn of hyoid bone. The non-enhancing mass did not involve any vital structures.

Preoperative diagnosis of obstructive sleep apnea was made, and upper gastro-intestinal screening for dysphagia was performed. A Biopsy was not performed at this time.

The parapharyngeal space was entered via a mucosal incision along the anterior pillar to gain access to parapharyngeal space. The incision was extended as a hemi palate splitting incision up to mid line. Preemptive external carotid artery ligation of the left side was performed in this case. While keeping the patient in the ‘tonsillectomy position’ a 30-degree Hopkins rod telescope was used and the tumor was dissected from skull base to hyoid under direct vision. After safe and complete removal of the tumor (figure.2) a vacuum drain was inserted via left nostril into operative field and closed with absorbable sutures in a single layer.

The drain was removed following day; the patient was encourage eating the same day and discharged in three days. Histology confirmed the diagnosis of Schwannoma and remains disease free after two years.

**Discussion**

Neurilemmomas have two main regions: Antoni A and Antoni B. Antoni A regions consist of fascicles of spindle-shaped Schwann cells arranged around an eosinophilic area surrounded by a palisade of spindle cells. The cells of the verocay bodies are oval or linear in shape. Antoni B regions consist of fewer Schwann cells spread in loose, myxomatousstroma that lack the organoid Verocay bodies (4). In this case, inspection revealed that both Antoni A and Antoni B tissue was present, as well as numerous blood vessels and hyalinized vessels.

Traditional PPS surgery mainly uses the transcervical and transparotid approaches. Malone et al. and Hamza et al. (5, 6) describe the resection of PPS tumors using the transcervical approach alone in 90-100% of cases. Hughes et al. (7) published a series of 172 cases using the transcervical and trans parotid approaches in 94%, using mandibular osteotomy in only 2% of resections. Works published by McElroth et al. (8) in 1963 describe the use of transoral approach along with ligature of the external carotid artery to remove PPS tumors in a study on 112 patients.

**Conclusion**

The success of PPS surgery depends on five conditions:

- Correct identification
- Exposition of the lesion
- Complete removal
- Minimum functional morbidity
- Minimum aesthetic morbidity as a consequence of the surgery.

Endoscopy assisted transoral approach with external carotid artery ligation is a safe and effective way to PPS tumour removal in selected cases, in addition to other more popular methods of PPS tumor removal.
References


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