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**Leiomyosarcoma of the** **stomach: A case report**

Kang WZ *et al*. Leiomyosarcoma of the stomach

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**Abstract**

***BACKGROUND***

Leiomyosarcoma of the stomach is extremely rare, and only 13 cases have been reported in the literature. Before the advent of immunohistochemical technique for the detection ofKIT protein, gastrointestinal stromal tumors (GISTs) were often misdiagnosed as leiomyomas and leiomyosarcomas. Leiomyosarcoma rarely occurs in organs besides the uterus and is rarely located in the stomach.

***CASE SUMMARY***

A 57-year-old woman presented with the symptom of melena over a one-month period. She had suffered weight loss, weakness, nausea, and vomiting for 15 days. At a local hospital, computed tomography showed a very large mass in the stomach, and the results of endoscopic examination and histopathological diagnosis were unclear. She received transfusion therapy and was transferred to our hospital. Upon arrival at our hospital, the patient was anemic. She denied any family history and had no specific past history. No signs of pulmonary metastasis were found on chest radiographs. Magnetic resonance imaging and computed tomography confirmed a very large tumor in the stomach, and no visible signs of metastatic disease were found. On October 30, 2013, the patient underwent resection of the stomach tumor and did not undergo any adjuvant treatment. The margins were negative and she had an uneventful recovery and was discharged after 12 d. One year after surgery, the patient died at home, and the causes of death were gastrointestinal obstruction and malnutrition. During that time, she was treated with Chinese medicine but the effect was not ideal. Because of gastrointestinal obstruction, the patient did not receive any re-examination.

***CONCLUSION***

Surgical resection is the standard treatment for gastric leiomyosarcoma. The diagnosis of this tumor mainly depends on histopathological examination. This case may suggest the aggressive behavior and poor prognosis of this tumor.

**Key words**: Leiomyosarcoma; Stomach; Case report; *KIT*; Gastrointestinal stromal tumor; Targeted next-generation sequencing

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**Core tip:** Leiomyosarcoma of the stomach is extremelyrare, and only 13 cases have been reported in theliterature. We herein report one case and review the relevant literature. This case might contribute to improving our understanding of the etiology, diagnosis, treatment strategies, and outcome of gastric leiomyosarcoma. This report can also serve as a reminder to gastroenterologists, surgeons, and pathologists who encounter gastric leiomyosarcoma in their clinical practice.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Leiomyosarcoma of the stomach is a malignant tumor that originates from the stomach. Leiomyosarcoma of the stomach is extremely rare, and most cases reported in the “pre-*KIT* era” as leiomyosarcomas of the stomach were actually gastrointestinal stromal tumors (GISTs) of the stomach. Only 13 well-described cases of gastric leiomyosarcoma have been reported in the English language literature since the early 2000s[1-13]. Due to the low incidence of this tumor, clinicians still have not formed a therapeutic consensus. Currently, the standard treatment is surgical resection of the tumor. Herein, we report one case of gastric leiomyosarcoma. We also discuss the clinical features, etiology, symptoms, diagnosis, prognostic factors, and treatment strategies of gastric leiomyosarcoma in this report.

**CASE PRESENTATION**

***Chief complaints***

A 57-year-old woman presented with the symptom of melena and she also suffered weight loss, weakness, nausea, and vomiting.

***History of present illness***

The patient presented with the symptom of melena over a one-month period. She had suffered weight loss, weakness, nausea, and vomiting for 15 days.

***History of past illness***

The patient had no special previous medical history.

***Personal and family history***

She denied any family history and had no specific past history.

***Physical examination upon***

During the physical examination, no special physical signs were found.

***Laboratory examinations***

See Table 1 for details.

***Imaging examinations***

At a local hospital, computed tomography showed a very large mass in the stomach. Magnetic resonance imaging and computed tomography performed at our hospital confirmed a very large tumor in the stomach, and no visible signs of metastatic disease were found (Figure 1). No signs of pulmonary metastasis were found on chest radiographs.

**FINAL DIAGNOSIS**

The histopathological diagnosis was gastric leiomyosarcoma, high-grade (differentiation 2, necrosis 1, mitosis 3; FNCLCC grading system), measuring 13 cm × 13 cm × 5 cm (Figure 2). The tumor had invaded the mucosa to the serosa. The lymph nodes exhibited no metastasis. Immunohistochemical staining showed SMA (3+), desmin (2+), CD117 (-), DOG1 (-), CD34 (-), S-100 (-), and a Ki-67 index of 50% (Figure 3). For a definitive diagnosis, we performed targeted next-generation sequencing. The genes in the panel were *KIT*, *PDGFRA*, *SDHA*, *SDHB*, *SDHC*, *SDHD*, *BRAF*, *KRAS*, *NRAS*, and *EGFR*, and no mutations were detected in any of the genes.

**TREATMENT**

On October 30, 2013, the patient underwent resection of the stomach tumor and did not undergo any adjuvant treatment. The margins were negative and the patient was discharged successfully after 12 d. After discharge, she received Chinese medicine treatment, but the effect was not good.

**OUTCOME AND FOLLOW-UP**

One year after surgery, the patient died at home, and the causes of death were gastrointestinal obstruction and malnutrition. During that time, she was treated with Chinese medicine but the effect was not ideal. Because of gastrointestinal obstruction, the patient did not receive any re-examination.

**DISCUSSION**

Before the advent of immunohistochemical technique for the detection of KIT, GISTs were often misdiagnosed as leiomyomas and leiomyosarcomas. Since the establishment of thattechnique in the late 1990s, it has been realized that primary gastric leiomyosarcoma is extremely rare and reportedly accounts for fewer than 1% of gastric tumors[1,2]. Only 13 well-described cases have been reported in the English language literature since 2007[1-13] (Table 2). Before our report, the largest case series of a single cohort of nine patients with gastric leiomyosarcoma[4] was reported by Rou *et al*[4].

The most common location for leiomyosarcoma is the retroperitoneum. In addition, large blood vessels, especially the inferior vena cava, comprise a significant proportion of the sites involved in leiomyosarcoma. In addition to these locations, leiomyosarcoma usually appears in the lower extremity, constituting a third group that accounts for 10%-15% of limb sarcomas[14]. Leiomyosarcoma rarely occurs in organs besides the uterus and is rarely located in the stomach[1]. Yamamoto *et al*[6] reported that among 55 cases of gastrointestinal leiomyosarcoma, only four (7.3%) were located in the stomach. According to our statistics, 50% (5/10) of gastric liposarcomas are located in the body of the stomach. In addition, 20% (2/10) of gastric liposarcomas are located in the fundus, with one case in the antrum, one case in the cardia, and one case in the pylorus. The diameters of the tumors described in the literature vary from 1 to 18 cm[1-13]. The origin of gastric leiomyosarcoma is usually between the muscularis propria and muscularis mucosa layers[2]. Agaimy *et al*[15] reported 85 cases of true smooth muscle neoplasms of the gastrointestinal tract and found that only one case of polypoid leiomyosarcoma arose from the muscularis mucosae of the stomach.

Leiomyosarcoma of the stomach is generally common among adults in their fifties, and men and women share the same risk of this disease[9]. In the literature, most patients are 50-69 years old. However, we are aware of three patients under 29 years old, which may suggest that gastric leiomyosarcoma is not truly rare among young people.

The etiology of gastric leiomyosarcoma is not yet clear. Because a diagnosis of primary leiomyosarcoma of the stomach is so rare, little information is available on its clinical characteristics. The tumor usually develops within the gastric wall, and the patient may remain asymptomatic for a long time. Symptoms in patients with leiomyosarcoma of the stomach can range from weakness, epigastric distress, weight loss, nausea, and vomiting to upper gastrointestinal tract bleeding. The kind of symptoms depends on the location and size of the tumor and the presence of ulceration. For patients with very large tumors, the main clinical sign may be the presence of a large abdominal mass of unknown origin. In this case, the first clinical sign was melena.

The diagnosis of gastric leiomyosarcomas mainly relies on pathological examination. In general, SMA, desmin, and h-caldesmon are positive in the majority (≥70%) of leiomyosarcoma cases[14], while CD117 (*KIT*), DOG1, and CD 34 are negative. DOG1 is the best marker for GIST, and there have been no gastric leiomyosarcoma cases with positive DOG1 staining[2]. Considering that 10% of GISTs are *KIT*-negative, gene analysis of *KIT* or *PDGFRA* leads to a conclusive diagnosis of gastric leiomyosarcoma. To obtain an accurate diagnosis, we performed targeted next-generation sequencing for *KIT*, *PDGFRA*, *SDHA*, *SDHB*, *SDHC*, *SDHD*, *BRAF*, *KRAS*, *NRAS*, and *EGFR* in our case. Because the patient had no neurofibromatosis or family history, tests for NF1 were ruled out. Computed tomography is the most informative method of examination and can also show secondary lesions in the liver, pancreas, lung, peritoneum, lymph nodes, or other sites. In some studies, *in vitro* MRI of the fresh, surgically resected tumor was performed to clarify the correlation between radiological and pathological features. More detailed investigations are necessary to evaluate the clinicopathological and radiological characteristics of true gastric leiomyosarcoma[10]. It is difficult to make a precise judgement by endoscopy, and its diagnostic value is unclear. However, endoscopic ultrasonography is very sensitive, with a success rate of up to 97%[16] in the diagnosis of leiomyosarcoma of the stomach[2]. With the guidance of endoscopic ultrasonography, biopsy may be possible, and a histological examination can be performed. Although metastases to the stomach are unusual, Mariana *et al*[17] reported a uterine leiomyosarcoma tumor and its metastasis to the stomach. Thus, the antidiastole between primary gastric leiomyosarcoma and metastatic tumors can be important. The patient’s unique medical history and imageological examination can contribute to finding the primary tumors.

Currently, the standard treatment for gastric leiomyosarcomas is complete surgical resection of the tumor. We noticed that two patients in the literature underwent endoscopic submucosal dissection. Due to a lack of clinical data, the advantages and disadvantages of this method are unknown. The use of chemotherapy and radiotherapy has been rarely reported in the literature, as leiomyosarcoma of the stomach is extremely rare worldwide. In an imageable patient-derived orthotopic xenograft model, Kawaguchi *et al*[18] found that a combination of gemcitabine and docetaxel caused the regression of both gastric leiomyosarcoma proliferation and invasion and provided a potential therapy for gastric leiomyosarcomas.

The main prognostic factors for these tumors include their histopathological grade and type, tumor size, evidence of synchronous metastasis, and parietal gastric infiltration[9,12]. The 5-year survival rate for patients with leiomyosarcomas is 22%[19]. Unfortunately, there is little data on the prognosis of patients with gastric leiomyosarcomas, and more careful clinical follow-up is advised.

**CONCLUSION**

Gastric leiomyosarcomas are extremely rare, and little information is available on their clinical characteristics. The diagnosis of this tumor mainly depends on histopathological examination. Differential diagnoses between gastric leiomyosarcomas and GISTs are important. At present, surgical resection is the standard treatment for leiomyosarcoma, and there is no therapeutic consensus. Because leiomyosarcoma is rarely observed in the stomach, its prognosis remains unclear. Our experience suggests that the outcome of gastric leiomyosarcoma is not optimistic.

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**Table 1 Laboratory examinations**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Test item** | **Result** |
| WBC | 14.61 G/L  |
| NEUT | 13.24 G/L  |
| HGB | 68 g/L  |
| RBC | 2.51 T/L  |
| PLT | 379 G/L  |
| Na | 128.4 mmol/L  |
| Cl | 82.6 mmol/L  |
| Ca | 2.01 mmol/L  |
| LDH | 303 U/L  |
| Fe | 3.3 μmol/L  |
| TP | 56.3 g/L  |
| ALB | 27.3 g/L  |
| CRP | 16.04 mg/dL  |

WBC: White blood cells; HGB: Hemoglobin; NEUT: Neutrophils; RBC: Red blood cells; PLT: Platelets; LDH: Lactate dehydrogenase; TP: Total protein; ALB: Albumin; CRP: C-reactive protein.

**Table 2 Review of the literature**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ref.** | **Age/Sex** | **Location** | **Size (cm)** | **Treatment** | **R or M** | **Outcome** |
| Sato *et al*[1] | 74/F | Body | 1.5 | ESD | No | WR in 36 M  |
| Hasnaoui *et al*[2] | 63/F | Cardia | 9  | Total gastrectomy | No | Unknown |
| Mehta *et al*[3] | 47/M | Body | 13 × 13 × 10 | Total excision of the greater curvature | Yes, liver | Alive in 35 M |
| Rou *et al*[4] | 48/F | Body  | 2 | Chemotherapy | Yes, lung, liver, pancreas  | DOD in 12 M |
| Weledji *et al*[5] | 69/M | Pylorus  | 8 | Partial gastrectomy | Unknown | DOD in 7 D |
| Yamamoto *et al*[6] | 51/M | / | 2.5 | Surgery | No | WR in 18 M |
| Damiano *et al*[7] | 71/M | Body | 9 × 8 × 3 | Atypical gastroresection | No | WR in 28 M |
| Insabato *et al*[8] | 51/M | Fundus | 3 | Total gastrectomy | No | WR in 10 M |
| Soufi *et al*[9] | 16/F | Fundus | / | Subtotal gastrectomy | No | WR in 18 M |
| Masuzawa *et al*[10] | 29/F | Body | 11 × 9.7 × 3.2  | Distal gastrectomy | No | WR in 8 M |
| Pauser *et al*[11] | 37/M | Antrum | 1 | Resected endoscopically | No | WR in 36 M |
| Geraci *et al*[12] | 25/M | Body | 18 × 12 × 7  | Wedge resection | No | WR in 12 M  |
| Insabato *et al*[13] | 65/M | / | 8.5 | Gastrectomy | Yes, lung | DOD in 24 M |

DOD: Death of disease; WR: Without recurrence; R or M: Recurrence or Metastasis; ESD: Endoscopic submucosal dissection.



**Figure 1 Magnetic resonance imaging and computed tomography confirmed a giant tumor in the stomach (arrow).** A: Magnetic resonance imaging; B: Computed tomography.



**Figure 2 Histological images showing the gastric mucosa infiltrated by a spindle cell tumor (HE staining).** A: ×40; B: ×200; C and D: The presence of tumor necrosis (lower-left corner of C, ×40) and high mitotic activity (D, ×400).



**Figure 3 Immunohistochemical staining showing the tumor cells diffusely positive for SMA and desmin, and negative for CD117, DOG1, CD34, and S100, with a Ki-67 index of 50%.** A: SMA (×200); B: Desmin (×200); C: CD117 (×200); D: DOG1 (×200); E: CD34 (×200); F: S100 (×100); G: Ki-67 (×200).