Synchronous Lymphoma, an Uncommon Affair!

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To the Editor,

An octogenarian gentleman presented with painless left cervical lymphadenopathy. The past history was insignificant with only a mild reduction in platelets in his recent health check.

An excision biopsy of the lymph node revealed a dual population of monotonous small cells with scattered mononucleate and binucleate Reed Sternberg (RS) cells. The immunostains confirmed the small cells to be of B cell phenotype co-expressing CD 5 and CD23 and the large cells were CD30 and CD15 positive with weak PAX 5 and negative with CD20. EBV was inconclusive and reported negative as it was weak and scattered staining pattern and a repeat test was negative. A diagnosis of composite lymphoma; B-small lymphocytic lymphoma with Hodgkin’s lymphoma (HL) was offered. The bone marrow biopsy revealed involvement by a small cell lymphoma (SLL).

Synchronous lymphomas are rare tumors composed of more than or equal to two lymphomas in the same tissue site which are morphologically and immunophenotypically distinct. NHL and Hodgkin lymphoma (HL) represent mutually exclusive entities (4).

HL is described in patients with CLL, a variant of Richter syndrome with an incidence of <0.5% (1-3) and following immunosuppressive therapy (5). Our case, presented with two separate immunohistomorphology. In the series reported by Xian et al (6) the 2 subtypes although showed biological differences with clonality studies, the overall clinical risk and significance did not differ. Whether this is a case of a de novo composite lymphoma, or a Richter like variant transformation of a hitherto undetected SLL, is unclear and the patient refused treatment at diagnosis and was lost to follow-up.
Keywords: Composite lymphoma, Hodgkin’s lymphoma, Non-Hodgkin lymphoma

References


Figure 1: Lymph node showing sheets of monotonous small B cells, positive with CD20 (inset) and scattered large mononucleate Reed-Sternberg cells, negative staining with CD20 (H&E; x400).
Figure 2: (a) The large cells are CD30 and CD15 positive (inset) (IHC; x100) with weak PAX 5 staining (inset arrow). (b) The small cells are CD5 and CD23 positive (inset) (IHC; x 100)