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Bilateral synchronous carcinoma breast – a rare case presentation

Vijaykumar Kappikeri

M R Medical College, India

Problem Statement: Bilateral breast carcinoma (BBC) is a rare entity with incidence of synchronous carcinoma being 2-5% of all breast malignancies, which is very less compared to metachronous breast carcinoma. There are no clear guidelines for the treatment of bilateral breast carcinomas. Synchronicity and metachronicity are usually associated with local and lymphatic spread and with blood-borne spread to lungs, bones and liver. Moreover, BBC is mostly lobular carcinomas but we report a rare case of infiltrating ductal carcinoma (IDC) as the primary carcinoma and lobular carcinoma as the secondary.

Methods: Here is a case of a 56-year-old female who presented with a Stage IIIB fungating growth around 10x8 cm in the lower inner, lower outer and upper outer quadrant of right breast since 6 months and a Stage IIA 4x4 cm tumour felt in the left breast in the upper inner and lower outer quadrant. Wedge biopsy of the right breast fungating mass showed ductal carcinoma and fine needle aspiration cytology (FNAC) of the left breast lump suggested lobular carcinoma which was confirmed on histopathology after surgery. Patient underwent total mastectomy for the right breast with right axillary dissection and simple mastectomy for the left breast. Patient was subjected to hormonal therapy (Tab Tamoxifen), chemotherapy (Cyclophosphamide, 5 FU, and Doxorubicin) followed by radiotherapy. Patient recovered well and shows no recurrence or signs of metastasis in the one year of follow up.

Results: Different histological subtypes with different grades of tumour in both breasts suggested two different synchronous primary tumours. Early detection of the contralateral tumour is of utmost importance emphasising the significance of breast self-examination. Screening tools like MRI have a greater sensitivity compared to mammography. There are no clear treatment guidelines for bilateral breast cancer but patients are often treated with bilateral mastectomy, with breast conservative surgery having unclear importance.

Conclusion: Meticulous diagnosis and appropriate management help to improve the longevity with an improved quality of life in patients of bilateral breast carcinoma.