Journal of Oncology Research & Treatments

Olivia, J Oncol Res Treat 2023, 8:3

Short Communication Open Access

Identifying a Rare and Severe Vascular Angiosarcoma Tumour

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Received: 28-Apr-2023, Manuscript No. AOT-23-101241; **Editor assigned:** 01-May-2023, PreQC No. AOT-23-101241 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 15-May-2023, QC No. AOT-23-101241; **Revised:** 22-May-2023, Manuscript No. AOT-23-101241 (R); **Published:** 29-May-2023, DOI: 10.4172/aot.1000227

Citation: Olivia M (2023) Identifying a Rare and Severe Vascular Angiosarcoma Tumour. J Oncol Res Treat. 8:227.

Description

Angiosarcoma is a rare and aggressive type of cancer that originates from the lining of blood vessels or lymphatic vessels. It is a subtype of sarcoma, a malignant tumor of connective tissues, and accounts for only a small percentage of all soft tissue sarcomas. Angiosarcoma can occur in various parts of the body, including the skin, soft tissues, and internal organs [1]. This essay aims to provide a comprehensive overview of angiosarcoma, including its causes, risk factors, clinical presentation, diagnosis, treatment options, and prognosis.

The prognosis of angiosarcoma is generally poor due to its nature and high propensity for metastasis. The exact cause of angiosarcoma remains unknown in most cases. However, certain risk factors have been identified, such as exposure to radiation, chronic lymphedema (swelling caused by the accumulation of lymphatic fluid), and certain genetic conditions, including Klippel-Trenaunay syndrome and Stewart-Treves syndrome. Radiation-induced angiosarcoma typically occurs several years after radiation therapy for other cancers, such as breast or lymphoma. While most cases of angiosarcoma are sporadic, some may have a hereditary component. Angiosarcoma can affect individuals of any age group, although it tends to be more common in older adults [2,3]. The clinical presentation of angiosarcoma varies depending on its location. Cutaneous angiosarcoma is the most common subtype, typically presenting as a bruise-like lesion on the head and neck, particularly in sun-exposed areas. This form of angiosarcoma is often misdiagnosed initially, leading to delayed treatment. Other subtypes of angiosarcoma can manifest as deep-seated masses in soft tissues or as tumors in organs such as the liver, spleen, and breast. Diagnosing angiosarcoma requires a combination of clinical evaluation, imaging studies, and biopsy [7-9]. However, definitive diagnosis is made through a biopsy, which involves taking a sample of the tumor tissue for microscopic examination by a pathologist. Treatment options for angiosarcoma depend on various factors, including the location, size, and stage of the tumor, as well as the overall health of the patient. Surgical resection is the primary treatment modality and aims to remove the tumor with adequate margins to minimize the risk of recurrence [10]. However, due to angiosarcoma and its tendency to invade surrounding tissues, achieving clear margins can be challenging. In cases where complete surgical resection is not feasible, other treatment modalities may be considered.

Conclusion

Radiation therapy plays a significant role in the management of angiosarcoma, particularly in cases where the tumor is inoperable or to reduce the risk of local recurrence after surgery. However, as mentioned earlier, radiation therapy itself can sometimes be a risk factor for the development of angiosarcoma in the future. Chemotherapy is another option, either as an adjuvant therapy after surgery or as a primary treatment for inoperable or metastatic angiosarcoma. Several chemotherapy agents have been used, including paclitaxel, docetaxel, and doxorubicin, although response rates vary. Targeted therapies and immunotherapies are emerging as potential treatment options for angiosarcoma. These therapies aim to specifically target certain molecular abnormalities or stimulate the body's immune system to recognize and attack cancer cells. These innovative methods are part of ongoing clinical studies that show potential for bettering angiosarcoma patient outcomes.

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