

Condition Dismissed, Case Missed: Late Presentation of Osteosarcoma

Nur Fadzlina Abu Seman,

Emergency and Trauma Department, Hospital Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Introduction

Osteosarcoma is a bone cancer that often affects male children^{2,4} and easily missed in early disease phase. We highlight such case in which, the condition was missed. It occurred in a female, less common for gender.

Case description

A 10-year-old Orang Asli girl came in with 7 months of right arm pain, worsening for 1 month with limping and was brought to a nearest Health Clinic 7 months earlier for attention. She denies history of fall or trauma and was treated as musculoskeletal pain. However, symptoms did not resolve. Patient returned to clinic after 1 month, but was discharged with a musculoskeletal pain. Patient brought to our centre after 7 months with worsening pain and limb weakness. The X-ray showed osteolytic changes with fracture of right upper humerus bone. Patient referred to orthopaedics team and then oncology team for chemotherapy.

Discussion

Limping and bone pain presented in early phase of children may be mistaken for musculoskeletal pain. Frequent healthcare visits without fall or trauma and no response to medication may warrant of other differentials. X-ray should be taken for such patient and lytic lesions should prompt consideration of bone tumour and appropriate quick referral.

Osteosarcoma can start in any bone, primarily in a long bone. Patient age correlates with survival, with poorest outcomes in older patients⁵. Early detection and referrals for tumour staging, metastases presence, and early treatment initiation impact the outcome. Staging for primary bone sarcomas is done with combination of a Computed Tomography (CT) to assess for pulmonary metastases and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) for local staging³. Despite progress, patients need longer follow-up to monitor recovery and detect any recurrence or late effects of intense chemotherapy and radiotherapy¹.

Conclusion

This report highlights the need to consider this diagnosis in cases of prolonged or non-resolving of limb pain. Early recognition and treatment can improve patient outcomes. Doctors must not overlook this condition as late detection worsens the outcomes.

Keywords

“Osteosarcoma”, “bone pain”, “x-ray”