

OSTEOCHONDROMA OF THE CERVICAL SPINE*

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Osteochondromas are the most frequent of the benign tumors and tumorlike lesions of bone. They may occur on any bone preformed in cartilage, but are rarely found in the vertebral column. Most of the reported cases located in the vertebral column are multiple osteochondromatosis¹. Solitary osteochondromas originating posteriorly in the cervical spine are distinctly rare². In this paper, we would like to present the case of an isolated form of osteochondroma occurring in the cervical spine, since this condition has rarely been described in the literature²⁻⁴.

Case Report and Discussion

A seven-year-old boy was admitted to the hospital with a non-tender mass in the posterior part of the neck. His parents had first noted a mass on the neck when he was five years old. The mass had increased in size during the last two years. The cervical motion was limited and a mild degree of torticollis had developed. Physical examination revealed a non-tender, hard mass on the midline of the posterior aspect of the neck. It was approximately 5 cm in diameter. Movement of the cervical spine was restricted. Roentgenograms of the neck revealed a partly ossified lesion involving the posterior elements of the fifth cervical vertebra and this projected upward below the spinous process of C-4 (Figure 1). No other bone tumors were found. Laboratory studies were normal.

On operating, the bone mass was seen to involve the spinous process and lamina of C-5. The base of this lesion blended imperceptibly with the lamina. Resection was carried out to the normal bone of the lamina.

Histological examination of the tumor specimen revealed the characteristic appearance of an osteochondroma with irregular hyaline cartilage cap and cortical and cancellous bone without bone marrow.

Solitary osteochondroma originating in the posterior area of the cervical spine are rare, in fact as far as we are aware only two cases have so far been reported in the

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Figure 1

A partly ossified mass involving the posterior elements of the fifth cervical vertebra.

literature. Fielding and Ratzan³ reported a unique osteochondroma of the cervical vertebrae, resulting in fusion. Inglis et al⁴ reported a second case of an osteochondroma arising posteriorly in the cervical spine. Here we report a further case of solitary osteochondroma located in the posterior elements of the cervical spine.

Summary

The case of a seven-year-old boy with solitary osteochondroma originating in the spinous process of the cervical spine, which is a rare condition, is presented.

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A number of meetings were held in conjunction with the congress. We are pleased to print three of the papers presented at these meetings. They cover the topics of oral rehydration therapy, diarrheal disease control against a background of the status of women and nation-wide basic health care services together with the training of local health personnel.