

Case Report

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Undifferentiated Carcinoma of the Larynx in a Developing Community



Wilson IB Onuigbo*

Department of Pathology, Medical Foundation and Clinic, Nigeria

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***Corresponding author:** Wilson IB Onuigbo, Department of Pathology, Medical Foundation and Clinic, 8, Nsukka Lane, Enugu 400001, Nigeria

Abstract

A rare form of laryngeal carcinoma is the undifferentiated form. There are but a few cases in the literature. Therefore, two cases from among the Ibos of South Eastern Nigeria are deemed to be worthy of documentation.

Keywords: Larynx; Undifferentiated carcinoma; Ibos; Males; Rarity

Introduction

A search of the Internet revealed but a few reports on the larynx exhibiting undifferentiated carcinoma. From Turkey [1], a 7-year-old male patient was reported to have “Undifferentiated laryngeal carcinoma with pagetoid spread.” From both France [2] and India [3], the authors went as far as to differentiate undifferentiated carcinoma of “nasopharyngeal type.” In this context, another differentiation was mooted in USA as the “small cell” type [4]. Therefore, the author presents two cases on the strength of carcinomas which were “undifferentiated,” the patients being of the Ibo ethnic group [5].

Case Report

1. NA, a 78-year-old Ibo man, presented to Dr. Udeh at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Enugu, with the history of cough, hoarseness and weight loss that had lasted for a year. Tracheostomy tube was inserted. Direct laryngoscopy was used to take a biopsy. Thereafter, the author received pale and dark fragments. On microscopy, much cartilage was seen with malignant epithelial cells whose differentiation was not discerned. Accordingly, it was diagnosed as undifferentiated carcinoma.
2. NF, an 82-year-old Ibo man, attended the Balsam Clinic at Enugu under Dr. Ezeanolue. Hoarseness was of a year's duration. Difficulty in swallowing and stridor were lasting for 3 months. A few small, pale fragments were biopsied. The corresponding author received them. On processing, malignant epithelial cells were seen, no differentiation being apparent. Accordingly, undifferentiated carcinoma was diagnosed.

Discussion

In pursuit of these researches, the useful pool had come from Birmingham (UK). The group there had hypothesized that

the fruit is “epidemiological analysis” whereas planting the tree constituted “the histopathology data pool” [6]. So far, apart from another “undifferentiated” carcinoma [7], the past examples in my collection are the following: clear cell [8], papillary [9], adenoid cystic [10], inflammatory [11], and mucoepidermoid [12]. Curiously, the connection between the “undifferentiated” carcinoma and the “differentiated” type emerged in Japan [13]. There, a 78-year-old man presented with undifferentiated carcinoma of the anal canal. However, at necropsy, it was found that he had “metastatic squamous cell carcinoma to inguinal nodes.”

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