

Neoplastic lymphangiosis of the upper aerodigestive tract simulating field cancerization: histopathological analysis, surgical limits and literature review

Franco Mattavelli¹, Natalia Pizzi¹, Elisabetta Pennacchioli², Stefano Radaelli², Pasquale Quattrone³, Davide Mattavelli¹, Andrea Fior⁴, and Silvana Pilotti³

¹Otolaryngology Unit, ²Surgical Department, and ³Pathology Unit, IRCCS Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori, Milan; ⁴Maxillofacial Surgery Clinic, Università degli Studi di Verona, Verona, Italy

ABSTRACT

Neoplastic lymphangiosis is defined as extensive embolic spread of cancer cells in the lymphatic vessels often without any evidence of a mass. Instead, field cancerization is defined by the presence of multifocal neoplastic lesions in a mucosal field previously exposed to mutagenic factors. In this case report, this oncological entity was suggested by the wide extent and multifocality of the disease and by the patient's exposure to risk factors. Instead, the pathological slides revealed the integrity of the mucosa and the presence of widespread embolic metastasis to lymphatic vessels. Thus, the diagnosis was changed to neoplastic lymphangiosis. This clinical presentation is a negative prognostic factor, and surgical treatment is ineffective because of the impossibility to obtain adequate free margins. The present case underlines the poor prognosis of such locally advanced cancer and the importance of recognizing it early so that the treatment approach can be adapted.

Key words: field cancerization, squamous cell carcinoma, neoplastic lymphangiosis.

Correspondence to: Franco Mattavelli, MD, Via Galbiati 6, 20864 Agrate Brianza (MB), Italy.
Tel +39-348-3579926;
email franco.mattavelli@yahoo.it

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