

Case report: An unconventional intraneural lipoma of the median nerve

¹Lee, EHL; ²Boniface, Y

¹Orthopaedics Department, Hospital Sibul, Jalan Ulu Oya, Sibul, Malaysia, ²Orthopaedics Department, Hospital Sibul, Jalan Ulu Oya, Sibul, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION:

Lipomas are adipose tissue tumours commonly found in the trunk, shoulder, upper arm and neck¹. Their presentation over peripheral nerves are extremely rare^{1,2}.

REPORT:

A 48 years old lady presented with asymptomatic, progressive swelling over the volar aspect of the right wrist over 5 years.

Clinical examination revealed a 2cm x 2cm mobile, fluctuant, soft, non-tender swelling over volar aspect of the wrist. Wrist range of motion and neurovascular status was unaffected.

Excision biopsy revealed a 2cm x 2cm well-encapsulated, yellowish mass, resembling a lipoma originating from the neural sheath of the median nerve. Complete excision was done and fibres of median nerve were intact. The swelling was sent for histopathology investigations. Post operatively, patient did not have any symptoms or signs of median nerve damage.

Fig 1: Mass arising from neural sheath of median nerve



Fig 2: Mass removed showing macroscopic features of lipoma



Adipose cells reside in the epineurium of peripheral nerves, hence intraneural lipomas can arise, though literature reports on it are limited to individual cases and small series².

Intraneural lipomas are reportedly more common in 4th-5th decades and have a female predominance². Patients are often asymptomatic though compressive nerve syndromes have been associated with larger sized intraneural lipomas^{1,2}.

Excision biopsy is indicated for progressive mass enlargement. They are often well-encapsulated masses that hardly infiltrate the adjoining nerve fibres, hence a complete excision can be safely performed with low risk of nerve injury².

CONCLUSION:

Intraneural lipomas, though rare should be considered as a possible etiology for swelling over the wrist.

REFERENCES:

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