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RENAL CELL CARCINOMA METASTATIC TO THE TONGUE: A CASE REPORT

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We report a case of renal cell carcinoma (RCC) metastatic to the tongue in a 58-year-old female. The patient had undergone radical nephrectomy for renal cell carcinoma 5 years previously, and experienced multiple metastatic disease in lung, bone, and contralateral kidney, before she noticed yellowish tumor on the left border of the tongue. Microscopic appearances of the biopsied lingual tumor were almost identical to those of the primary kidney tumor, thus the diagnosis of lingual metastasis from renal cell carcinoma was established. This case represents the tenth case of RCC metastatic to the tongue.

Key words: Renal cell carcinoma, Lingual metastasis

INTRODUCTION

Renal cell carcinoma (RCC) is an unpredictable tumor which occasionally metastasizes to uncommon sites such as thyroid gland, parotid gland, and gingiva\(^{1-3}\). The tongue has been reported as one such unusual metastatic site\(^{4-12}\).

We report one additional case of a 58-year-old female and also briefly review the literature.

CASE REPORT

A 58-year-old Japanese female noticed a growing yellowish tumor on the left border of the tongue in January 1989 (Fig. 1). She had undergone radical left nephrectomy for RCC 5 years previously. In spite

![Fig. 1. A yellowish tumor located on the left border of the tongue.](image1)

![Fig. 2A. The lingual tumor consisted of clear tumor cells (H&E, ×66).](image2A)

![Fig. 2B. Primary renal cell carcinoma of the kidney consisted of clear tumor cells (H&E, ×66).](image2B)
of the postoperative \(\alpha\)-interferon therapy, she had metastatic disease in the lung, bone, and contralateral kidney. Microscopic examination of the biopsied lingual tumor revealed that the tumor consisted of tumor cells with clear cytoplasm, essentially identical to those in the primary kidney tumor. Thus the diagnosis of metastatic lingual RCC was established.

The lingual tumor was resected by cryosurgery, metastatic disease progressed and she died of hepatic insufficiency due to multiple liver metastases in June, 1989. Autopsy was not granted for this case.

**DISCUSSION**

Metastatic tumor to the tongue is extremely rare. Zegarelli et al. found 15 cases of lingual metastatic carcinoma or malignant melanoma among 6,881 autopsy cases, of which more than 99% were cases of malignant diseases in patients at Roswell Park Memorial Institute from 1955 to 1971. Thus, the incidence was about 0.2%, which was similar to that reported by others14,15).

Only 10 cases of RCC metastatic to the tongue have been reported including our case (Table 1). These cases include 6 males and 4 females with the median age of 57.8 (ranging from 41 to 77). Eight cases had other metastatic diseases, which was lung metastasis in 7 cases. Seven of the 8 RCC cases with multiple metastases including the tongue died within one year after discovery of lingual metastasis. The remaining two RCC cases with solitary lingual metastasis were alive, although the observation periods were not mentioned in the literature. We conclude that RCC patients with multiple metastases including the tongue have poor prognosis, but the lingual metastasis itself is not a prognostic indicator of RCC. The cellular atypism of the metastatic tumor was interesting in our case.

**REFERENCES**


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