

Metastatic Esophageal Squamous Cell Carcinoma Presenting with COVID-19 Infection and Cardiac Tamponade

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Abstract : Background: Esophageal squamous cell carcinoma can be presented with many symptoms, such as dysphagia or weight loss. However, in some circumstances, rare presentations can be found, e.g., dyspnea, which is more common in pulmonary malignancy. And dyspnea is also one of the most common presentations of COVID-19 infection. So, in this case, we can learn from many points in patient symptoms and findings leading to the diagnosis of esophageal squamous cell carcinoma. Method: This research is a case-report study including one patient from Mahasarakham Hospital, Thailand. Data were collected during December 2021. Result: A 55-year-old Thai male patient with an unknown past medical history presented with dyspnea and shortness of breath for the duration of three days prior to admission. His symptom also included cough, fever, and sore throat. Laboratory results indicated that the patient had COVID-19 pneumonia. Further investigation showed that he had cardiac tamponade and suspected pulmonary/esophageal cancer. Lung biopsy and pericardiocentesis were done, which were positive for carcinoma from pericardial effusion but negative for malignancy from the lung biopsy. Later esophagogastroduodenoscopy was done with endoscopic tissue biopsy; the result was positive for squamous cell carcinoma of the esophagus. Conclusion: Most commonly, esophageal cancer is presented with dysphagia or weight loss. However, in some rare cases, patients can also be presented with dyspnea due to cardiac tamponade. And in recent years, COVID-19 has become a pandemic all over the world, sometimes masking symptoms of other diseases. Such as in this case, the patient didn't improve after the pneumonia was resolved, which led to the final diagnosis of metastatic esophageal cancer.

Keywords : esophageal cancer, cardiac tamponade, metastatic squamous cell carcinoma, COVID-19 infection

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