World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Biomedical and Biological Engineering
Vol:19, No:02, 2025

Kissing Cervical Spine Schwannomas in a Young Female from a Low Resource Setting: A Case Report

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Abstract : Background: Multiple schwannomas are typically associated with neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1), but rare cases occur independently of neurofibromatosis. Schwannomas are benign, slow-growing tumors, primarily affecting the cervical and lumbar spine. When large, they may extend over multiple vertebral levels, posing surgical challenges. Case Presentation: A 13-year-old Ugandan Munyankore female patient, presented with a 6-year history of progressive quadriparesis, particularly in the lower limbs. Clinical examination showed hypertonia and hyperreflexia, with no indicators of neurofibromatosis or prior trauma. MRI revealed two “kissing” schwannomas extending from C2 to T2 in the cervical spine. Decompressive surgery was performed through laminoplasty and partial lesion resection, and histology confirmed schwannoma. Two weeks postoperatively, the patient experienced cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leakage, neck pain, and headache, which required re-operation and duraplasty. Following these interventions, the patient’s neurological status stabilized, with noted improvement in lower limb strength. Discussion: “Kissing” schwannomas are most frequently documented in the cerebellopontine angle, rarely in the spine, and even more rarely in children. While multiple schwannomas are often associated with NF2, this case had no family history or clinical signs of the disorder. Giant invasive spinal schwannomas (GISS) that span multiple vertebrae demand intricate surgical approaches due to their proximity to neurovascular structures. Conclusion: This is the first reported case of kissing cervical schwannomas in a young patient from a low- to middle-income country. Surgical decompression, though challenging, is critical for neurological recovery in such advanced cases.

Keywords : kissing schwannoma, cervical spine, low resource, young, uganda
Conference Title : ICNN 2025 : International Conference on Neurology and Neurosurgery
Conference Location : London, United Kingdom
Conference Dates : February 10-11, 2025