

## A case of chronic expanding hematoma right cubital fossa

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### **ABSTRACT**

We presented a case of chronic expanding hematoma right elbow which was localized to right cubital fossa. The hematoma developed gradually in the cubital fossa after blunt injury to the elbow. Patient had a painless full range of motion of the affected elbow. Radiographic examination of elbow was normal. Excisional biopsy was done. A well circumscribed mass, reddish brown in colour, oval in shape, soft in consistency with a fibrous pseudo-capsule was resected. The diagnosis was confirmed by histopathological examination of the resected specimen.

**Key words:** Excisional biopsy, Hematoma

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Chronic expanding hematoma usually develops after trauma but there can be other causes like clotting disorders, muscle injuries, contusions etc. Hematomas are frequent injuries incurred during sports. Hematomas in muscles like gastrocnemius<sup>1</sup>, quadriceps<sup>2, 3, 4</sup> and ilio-psoas<sup>5</sup> are well described in the literature. Chronic expanding hematoma is characterized by its persistence and progressive increasing size after the initial hemorrhage<sup>6</sup>. Diagnosis of

this condition may be difficult and is often mistaken for one of the relatively more frequent malignant neoplasms<sup>7</sup>. We present a case of chronic expanding hematoma of the cubital fossa which developed after blunt injury to the elbow region.

### **CASE REPORT**

A 22 year girl presented to the outpatient department with a painless swelling right cubital fossa. The patient had noticed the swelling four months back. The gradually increasing size of swelling made the patient

apprehensive and she presented to our hospital. Patient gave history of falling of a heavy wooden log on her right elbow about five months before. General physical examination was normal. Local examination revealed a discrete solitary non-tender, mobile soft swelling situated lateral to biceps tendon measuring about 4 cm in the longest diameter. It was non-pulsatile and non compressible. Hematology and

coagulation profile of the patient was normal. Excision of the mass was done with surrounding fibrous capsule .The mass was reddish brown in color, soft in consistency and surrounded by dense fibrous capsule. Histopathological examination of the specimen revealed features of chronic expanding hematoma. There were no postoperative complications and no signs of recurrence at 6 months follow-up.



**Figure 1:** Photograph of the excised mass.

## **DISCUSSION**

Muscular hematomas have been well described as common sports injury. Many reports have been made on quadriceps, gastronemius and iliopsoas hematomas. Most hematomas subside without causing any serious clinical problems. Some may persist and appear

clinically as gradually expanding lesions in the soft tissues mimicking neoplastic growths<sup>6</sup>. These lesions are similar to chronic subdural hematomas, pseudotumors in haemophilia, hemorrhagic neuropathy and rectus sheath hematomas<sup>7</sup>. The precise mechanism responsible for chronic expanding hematoma remains unclear.

Bradshaw et al speculated that initial trauma results in displacement of skin and subcutaneous fatty tissue away from more deeply located, fixed fascia and underlying muscle with the consequent formation of blood-filled cysts surrounded by dense fibrous tissue. The lesion's self-perpetuating and expanding nature appears to be due to irritant effect of blood and its breakdown products leading to repeated exudation or bleeding from capillaries in the granulation tissue of the cyst wall<sup>8,9</sup>.

Though CT scan, MRI, and USG have been suggested for diagnosis of chronic expanding hematoma<sup>6,7</sup> we opted for excisional biopsy for the diagnosis. Our case was due to blunt injury to the elbow region.

### **CONCLUSION**

There are various causes of hematomas formation which should be kept in mind in addition to more common causes like trauma and coagulation disorders. Chronic expanding hematoma should be kept in the differential diagnosis of any elbow swelling.

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