



SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS, HIV/AIDS

MORE THAN SKIN DEEP: A CASE OF KAPOSI'S SARCOMA IN A 46-YEAR OLD HIV-POSITIVE FILIPINO MALE

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Background: Kaposi's Sarcoma, a multifocal tumor of endothelial cell origin caused by Human Herpesvirus (HHV)-8, is divided into four clinical variants: (1) Classical Kaposi's Sarcoma, (2) Endemic African Kaposi's Sarcoma, (3) Kaposi's Sarcoma associated with immunosuppressive therapy, and (4) AIDS-related Kaposi's Sarcoma.

Observation: A 46-year-old male consulted for a seven-month history of several violaceous, occasionally tender, and occasionally pruritic, purplish papules and nodules on the right hand, and both feet. Patient was previously prescribed with clobetasol ointment which provided minimal improvement of pruritus, and no change in appearance of lesions. Patient was noted to be HIV positive since 2013 and is currently taking anti-retroviral medications since then. He is a single, bisexual male with more than 30 partners, both male and female, and last partner was noted to have expired from AIDS. Skin punch biopsy done was consistent with Kaposi's Sarcoma. The patient's clinical manifestation is most similar to AIDS-related Kaposi's Sarcoma due to the presence of small oval violaceous macules which developed rapidly into plaques and small nodules, the HIV positive status of the patient, and the presence of lesions at multiple locations at disease onset including the oral mucosa. CT scan done for the abdomen and chest showed positive for lesions in the liver and lungs. Patient underwent 6 cycles of chemotherapy with paclitaxel which resulted to improvement of lesions in the lungs and liver.

Key message: This particular case initially presented without the patient disclosing his HIV status, hence it is important for dermatologists to have a keen clinical eye for diagnosing to achieve better treatment outcomes. Highly active anti-retroviral therapy is the ideal treatment for AIDS-related Kaposi's Sarcoma. It is imperative to screen the extracutaneous sites for involvement of other organs such as the lymph nodes, gastrointestinal tract, and lungs.

