A SOLITARY SECONDARY DEPOSIT IN THE PANCREAS
FROM A CARCINOMA OF THE CERVIX

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SECONDARY deposits in the pancreas from carcinomas elsewhere are quite commonly found but solitary secondary deposits are rare.

The following case is sufficiently unusual to warrant a brief report.

Case Report

A lady aged 66 was admitted to Westminster Hospital in August 1959 with a stage II carcinoma of the cervix. Biopsy revealed a moderately well differentiated carcinoma (Fig. 1) which was treated with two insertions of radium by the Stockholm technique and a course of external beam radiotherapy with the Theratron unit. A good recovery was made apart from persistent painful micturition, which was worse at night. One year later, at cystoscopy no evidence of recurrent growth was seen, there being some basal trigonitis only.

She remained well until July 1964, some five years after the cervical lesion was first treated, when she presented with a nine week history of jaundice. This was associated with back pain, weight loss, anorexia, dark urine and pale stools.

On Examination. The patient was deeply jaundiced and had obviously lost weight. The abdomen was slightly distended and the smooth, tender liver edge was palpable 8 cm. below the costal margin. Beneath the liver the distended gall bladder could be felt. On pelvic examination the vault of the vagina was found to be obliterated by post-irradiation scarring but there was no evidence of recurrence of tumour.

Investigations: Total serum bilirubin 13.5 mg./100 ml., Conjugated 9.3 mg., free 3.2 mg./100 ml., Serum alkaline phosphatase 31 K.A. units, Prothrombin time: normal. SGOT 34 I.U., S.G.P.T. 19 I.U., Hb. 12.4 g./100 ml., Serum albumin 2.1 g. globulin

FIG. 1.—Section from biopsy of cervix taken in 1959 showing moderately well differentiated squamous carcinoma. (H. & E. x 65.)
Histological examination of the resected duodenum and pancreas (Fig. 2) showed the tumour to be infiltrating the muscle and submucosa of the duodenum. Histological examination (Fig. 3) showed the tumour to be a moderately well differentiated squamous-celled carcinoma with appearances exactly similar to those of the biopsy of the carcinoma of cervix obtained in 1959. It was concluded, therefore, that the lesion of the head of the pancreas was a secondary deposit from the carcinoma of the cervix which had been treated five years previously.

Necropsy. The cause of death was found to be suppurative bronchopneumonia. The anastomoses were intact but the choledcho-duodenostomy was not patent. There was an abscess containing 40 ml. of creamy pus in the region of the cut surface of the pancreas. Dense fibrosis had obliterated the upper vagina and cervical canal, the rest of the pelvic organs were small and atrophic and otherwise normal.

There was no macroscopic or microscopic evidence of residual tumour in the pelvis, para-aortic lymph nodes, or elsewhere.

Discussion

Solitary secondary deposits from any carcinoma are of considerable surgical importance because they represent the only type of distant malignant dissemination which is amenable to surgical cure. In addition this patient is particularly interesting in that as far as can be ascertained no other case of a solitary secondary deposit in the pancreas causing obstructive jaundice from a carcinoma of the cervix could be found in previous reports.

The most common mode of spread from a carcinoma of the cervix is by direct extension (Willis, 1960), thereafter by invasion of the lymphatics in a fairly regular pattern ( Henriksen, 1944). Blood-borne metastases may disseminate to almost any tissue of the body but when they
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do so they are often a late manifestation of the disease and the organs most commonly involved are the liver, lungs, bones and bowel (Arneson and Williams, 1960, Herbut, 1953). The most common histological type is the squamous celled tumour which occurred in nearly 80% of the series of cases reviewed by Blaikley, Lederman and O'Connor (1962).

In reviewing post-mortem findings in 108 autopsies on patients who had had carcinoma of the cervix, Sotto, Graham, and Pickren (1960) found that, of those in which the pelvis was clear, only 9% had extra-pelvic metastases. In 3% of this series deposits occurred in the pancreas but it is not stated whether these occurred with or without deposits elsewhere or whether residual growth was present in the pelvis. It was also noted that of 100 patients dying of the treatment or complications of the disease only 8% did so in the 5th to 10th post treatment year.

The incidence of both pancreatic deposits and extra-pelvic deposits with a clear pelvis was slightly higher in a series of autopsies performed on patients who underwent radical surgery for cancer of the cervix reviewed by Kelly, Parson, Friedell and Summers, (1960). 16% had deposits elsewhere but not in the pelvis, and 9% of all the patients in the series had deposits in the pancreas.

Late recurrence of this cancer has been reported in a number of sites; thus Hawkins and Andres (1935) described a patient who developed a recurrence on the cervix itself which occurred 30 years after treatment with radium. Von Capellar and Cummings (1957) reported a patient who had a solitary duodenal metastasis occurring eight years after treatment of a Stage I carcinoma. They point out, however, that in their patient the deposit may have arisen in the para-aortic lymph nodes and secondarily invaded the duodenum.

The patient reported presents, therefore, a combination of unusual features and the pathology appears to be unique.

Summary

A patient is described who had a solitary secondary deposit from a neoplasm of the cervix treated by irradiation five years previously, in the head of the pancreas producing obstructive jaundice. In the discussion the exceptional rarity of this case is pointed out.

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REFERENCES


CHRONIC TOXOPLASMOSIS WITH NEGATIVE DYE TEST?


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Although high or rising antibody titres are needed to support a clinical diagnosis of acute toxoplasmosis, low titres to the dye test are believed to indicate past infection. Since the ocular manifestations of toxoplasmosis usually result from long standing chronic infections it is of importance in ophthalmic practice to determine whether or not a patient has been infected. It has been the custom to assume that patients who are negative to the dye test at a titre of 1:4 do not suffer from chronic toxoplasmosis.

Recent evidence now suggests that infection with Toxoplasma does not always provoke a dye-test response. Engelbrecht and Franceschetti (1963)