A rare differential diagnosis of a groin lump: lymphangioma

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DESCRIPTION

A 56-year-old woman presented to the emergency department with worsening pain over a slow growing left groin swelling that started few weeks ago. The only other symptom was an episode of vomiting on the day of presentation. The patient had undergone a saphenous venous surgery few years ago. From venous disease point of view, she was asymptomatic since her surgery. There was no other notable history or family history. Clinical examination showed a 5×6 cm swelling in the left groin, located below and lateral to the pubic tubercle (figure 1). Rest of the general and systemic examination was within normal limits. High-resolution soft tissue ultrasound scan of the groin could not rule out the possibility of an incarcerated groin hernia. Clinically, a diagnosis of incarcerated femoral hernia was made and the patient was taken for surgical exploration. Transinguinal surgical exploration

revealed several multilocular, semitranslucent cystic swellings of soft to firm consistency, ranging from 0.5 to 5 cm, in the left femoral region consistent with lymphangioma (figures 2–5), which was later confirmed by histopathological examination.

Figure 1 A swelling in the left groin located below and lateral to the pubic tubercle. The outline of the swelling has been demarcated. Blue arrow points to pubic tubercle. Red arrow points to the anterior superior iliac spine. Black arrow shows the scar of previous venous surgery.

Figure 2 A lymphangioma being dissected from the groin.

Figure 3 A multiloculated and semitranslucent cystic swelling is being dissected from the surrounding structures. The arrow shows the femoral nerve.

Figure 4 All the swellings have been excised.

Figure 5 Multiple lymphangiomatous swellings ranging from 0.5 to 5 cm.

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Learning points

- ▶ The differential diagnosis of groin lump may encompass a wide range of clinical entities. A clinician should consider all groin swellings to be hernias until proven otherwise. Although it is usually possible to reach a clinical diagnosis with careful history and examination, the possibility of such a rare differential diagnosis has to be kept in mind.
- ▶ Lymphangioma is a very uncommon congenital hamartomatous lymphoreticular malformation accounting for 4% of vascular tumours. It is commonly found in the neck, axilla, mediastinum, peritoneum, retroperitoneum and groin in early childhood.^{1–3}
- ▶ Mainstay of treatment is complete excision, failing which recurrence is quite common.

Competing interests None.

Patient consent Obtained.

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