A case of a large, painless retroperitoneal mass causing hydronephrosis and biliary obstruction

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DESCRIPTION
A 56-year-old man presented with abdominal distension over a few months. He was otherwise well and routine blood tests were normal. Examination of the abdomen revealed a firm swelling. CT scan was performed for further evaluation.

A large, cystic, non-enhancing mass on the right side of the abdomen was observed on CT scan. This was closely related to the right psoas muscle with secondary compression of the right ureter and resultant right-sided hydronephrosis (figure 1).

Subsequent MRI demonstrated a 19.5×17×21 cm, high T2 signal intensity lesion in the right retroperitoneum. On T1 fat saturated sequences, it appeared hypointense with thin internal mildly enhancing septations (figure 2). Right-sided hydronephrosis was observed (figure 3) together with compression of the distal common bile duct causing mild intra and extrahepatic biliary dilation (figure 4).

The mass was removed surgically (figure 5). It was gelatinous in nature and was sent to the
laboratory for histopathological diagnosis, which revealed that the mass was a myxoid liposarcoma.

Myxoid liposarcoma is the second most common adult soft tissue sarcoma after well-differentiated liposarcomas. It may be difficult to establish the diagnosis with MRI due to the lack of fat signal intensity and, without administration of contrast, the tumour may mimic cystic pathology, which includes benign lesions such as a hydatid cyst. Gadolinium-enhanced MRI is therefore an essential part of the management. Myxoid liposarcomas have a high risk of local recurrence (50%) and a 20% rate of metastasis.

Learning points

▸ Myxoid liposarcoma is an indolent slow-growing malignant tumour of mesenchymal origin.
▸ Myxoid liposarcoma may lead to diagnostic confusion on imaging—contrast-enhanced MRI is paramount in establishing the diagnosis.
▸ Sarcomatous tumours should be included in the differential of retroperitoneal masses.

Contributors

CA and JA performed the literature review and drafted the article. KC made the radiological diagnosis and JEA performed the surgery.

Competing interests

None declared.

Patient consent

Obtained.

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally peer reviewed.

REFERENCES