Large schwannoma of the sciatic nerve

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DESCRIPTION

A 40-year-old woman was referred with an 8-month history of fullness of the right posterior thigh. This was associated with pain, primarily on sitting and occasional radicular pain down the ipsilateral leg. On examination a mobile, firm lump was identified that was tender to palpate and which also elicited a shooting pain down the leg on examination. MRI demonstrated a well-defined multiloculated mass 9 cms×6 cms which appeared to arise from the sciatic nerve, raising suspicion for a schwannoma (figure 1). A biopsy confirmed the diagnosis of schwannoma. Surgical excision

was undertaken, carefully dissecting the lesion from the sciatic nerve (figure 2). The patient had an uneventful postoperative recovery without neurovascular deficits.

A schwannoma is the most common benign peripheral nerve sheath tumour composed of Schwann cells.¹ It represents 8% of all soft tissue tumours with sciatic nerve involvement being <1%.² Symptoms of nerve sheath tumours relate to nerve function and surrounding structures. Direct compression from large lesions can present with symptoms similar to those of sciatica. The diagnoses of sciatic nerve-associated schwannomas are typically made with MRI often subsequent to a normal lumbar spine MRI. Treatment of this epineurium encapsulated tumour is by delicate excision, *en masse* and nerve preservation followed by histopathology for definitive diagnosis.

Figure 1 A coronal (A) and axial (B) T1-weighted MRI of a well-defined multiloculated mass 9 cms×6 cms arising from the sciatic nerve.

Figure 2 Schwannoma lesion excised *en masse*.

Learning points

- ▶ At 8% schwannomas are the most common soft tissue tumour.
- ▶ Symptoms of schwannomas are dependent on the location and nerve association.
- ▶ Treatment involves complete capsule enucleation to reduce recurrence.

Contributors statement OG and PE: Image and data gathering. Writing of manuscript. GOT: Clinical supervisor and treated the patient.

Competing interests None declared.

Patient consent Obtained.

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