Massive Localised Lymphoedema: A New Benign Entity In The Morbidly Obese Patient

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Introduction:
Massive Localized Lymphoedema (MLL) is a new benign entity that is becoming more relevant due to its association with morbid obesity. It is an asymmetrical soft tissue lesion that can progress and develop in size gradually. It is under diagnosed by clinicians and can be mistaken for a malignant soft tissue lesion.

Aims:
To highlight this new clinical entity and its prevalence in the general population of the morbidly obese patient.

Case Report:
A 65 year old man with a BMI of 71 presented to our Emergency Department with an infected large right sided inguinal soft tissue mass. The mass had gradually increased in size over 13 years and he was mostly confined to bed and dependent on carers for most of his activities of daily living. CT of abdomen and pelvis demonstrated a right inguinal mass measuring 42 cm x 41 cm x 23 cm with extensive thickening and oedema of skin and soft tissue stranding throughout with signs of chronic venous congestion. He underwent complete excision of this mass to exclude a malignant lesion. The specimen weighed 4520 grams. The nature of MLL and similarity to soft tissue sarcomas still presents a diagnostic dilemma for the pathologist. However, MLL is different histologically when compared to a neoplastic process as there is an absence of atypical stromal cells, lipoblasts and atypical adipocytes. In addition, the collagen in MLL is finer and paler in contrast to the dense eosinophilic collagen type seen with WDL. Finally, the presence of reactive vessels at the junction of adipose and fibrous tissue is typical for MLL.

Conclusion:
MLL is typically described as an asymmetrical, chronic, diffuse soft tissue lesion occurring in the lower extremity with an oedematous appearance akin to chronic lymphoedema in a morbidly obese patient. It is crucial that the main clinical features of MLL are highlighted to the histopathologist to facilitate the diagnosis of MLL.

References: