Case Report:
B-cell Prolymphocytic Leukemia in a Young Male.

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Citation: Pailoor K, Swethadri GK, Jayaprakash, Fernandes H. B-cell Prolymphocytic Leukemia in a Young Male. Online J Health Allied Scs. 2011;10(2):25

Submitted: May 19, 2011; Accepted: Jul 16, 2011; Published: Jul 30, 2011

Abstract: B-cell prolymphocytic leukemia [B-PLL] is a neoplasm of B prolymphocytes affecting the peripheral blood, bone marrow and spleen. The principal disease characteristics are massive splenomegaly with absent or minimal peripheral lymphadenopathy and a rapidly rising lymphocyte count. Here, we report a case of B-PLL in a 42 year old male who had come for routine health check up.

Key Words: B-PLL; Prolymphocyte; Massive splenomegaly; Immunophenotyping.

Introduction: B-cell prolymphocytic leukemia is an extremely rare disease, comprising approximately 1% of lymphocytic leukemias.1 It needs to be differentiated from T-cell prolymphocytic leukemia for therapeutic and prognostic purposes. Differentiation can be made by a comprehensive approach taking into account the clinical features, the cell morphology and the immunophenotype of leukemic cells.2 B-cell usually affects elderly males over 50 years of age. The principal disease characteristics are massive splenomegaly with absent or minimal peripheral lymphadenopathy and a rapidly rising lymphocyte count. Immunological markers show a B cell phenotype such as strong expression of surface IgM+/- IgD and Bcell antigens such as CD19,CD20,CD22, CD79a and b.2 Here, we present the clinico-pathologic features of a case of B-PLL with emphasis on the diagnostic features and differential diagnosis.

Case Report:
A 42 years old man had come to our centre for routine health check up. On physical examination, massive splenomegaly and minimal posterior cervical lymphadenopathy were observed. Laboratory investigation revealed hemoglobin of 12.3g/dl, total leucocyte count of 12x10^3/cu.mm and platelet count of 71x10^3/cu.mm. Blood biochemistry was normal except for mildly elevated lactate dehydrogenase level. Peripheral blood smear showed 70% atypical lymphoid cells [prolymphocytes] which were medium sized with regular round nucleus, moderately condensed nuclear chromatin, a prominent central nucleolus and a relatively small amount of faintly basophilic cytoplasm [Figure 1]. Bone marrow aspirate smears showed predominantly atypical lymphoid cells with similar morphology as peripheral blood cells [Figure 2]. There was marked reduction of normal hematopoietic cells. On flow cytometric immunophenotyping, the atypical lymphoid cells were positive for CD19, CD20, CD22, CD23, CD45 and negative for CD2, CD3, CD4, CD5 and ZAP-70. Taking into account the clinical, morphological and immunophenotypic features, a diagnosis of B-PLL was made. Patient was treated with Cytotoxan, Adriamycin, Vincristine and Prednisolone regime. A repeat count was done 6 months after chemotherapy. It showed a total leucocyte count of 9,000 cells/cu.mm with the absence of prolymphocytes. The patient is doing well, 20 months after diagnosis and therapy.

Figure 1: Peripheral blood smear showing prolymphocytes which have moderately condensed nuclear chromatin and a prominent nucleolus [Leishmanx100X]

Figure 2: Bone marrow aspirate smear showing numerous prolymphocytes in diffuse sheets [Leishmans 100X].
tinction from Hairy cell leukemia [HCL] variant is based on a variable number of plasmacytoid lymphocytes. Those of CLL/PL. Also, CLL/PL have 10-55% prolymphocytes more uniform and have a more regular nuclear outline than prolymphocytes being a key criteria. B prolymphocytes are chronic lymphocytic leukemia [CLL] and CLL/PL with 55% irregular nuclei. Cells with agranular basophilic cytoplasm,and have a markedly contrast, the cells of T-PLL are small to medium-sized lymphoid relatively small amount of faintly basophilic cytoplasm. In con-
densed nuclear chromatin, a prominent central nucleolus and a small lymphocyte), with a round nucleus, moderately con-
densed nuclear chromatin, a prominent central nucleolus and a relatively small amount of faintly basophilic cytoplasm. In contrast, the cells of T-PLL are small to medium-sized lymphoid cells with agranular basophilic cytoplasm,and have a markedly irregular nuclei. Typically, B-PLL is differentiated from chronic lymphocytic leukemia [CLL] and CLL/PL with 55% prolymphocytes being a key criteria. B prolymphocytes are more uniform and have a more regular nuclear outline than those of CLL/PL. Also, CLL/PL have 10-55% prolymphocytes and a variable number of plasmacytoid lymphocytes. The distinction from Hairy cell leukemia [HCL] variant is based mainly on the appearances of the cytoplasm. In HCL variant, the cytoplasm is more abundant and distinctly villous, whereas in B-PLL it is generally smooth.1,2

The bone marrow shows interstitial or nodular infiltrate of nucleolated cells with an intertrabecular distribution. In the present case, the bone marrow was diffusely infiltrated by prolymphocytes with marked suppression of normal hematopoietic elements. The cells of B-PLL strongly express B-cell antigens such as CD19, CD20, CD22, CD79a and CD79b. In this case, the patient strongly expressed CD19, CD20, CD22, CD23 and CD45. The cells of T-PLL express CD2, CD3 and CD7. The reported median survival is 3 to 4 years for patients with prolymphocytic leukemia and 8 years for those with CLL. Patients with T-PLL have even poorer prognosis than those with B-PLL. B-PLL responds poorly o therapies for CLL and T-PLL. Hence, typing PLL is very critical for both therapeutic and prognostic purposes.

In conclusion, a precise diagnosis by means of a comprehensive approach involving clinical, morphological and immunophenotypic features are extremely critical in this era for patient management and prognostication. Also, this case illustrates the importance of immunophenotyping as an adjunct to morphology in the diagnosis of chronic lymphoproliferative disorders. References: