Abstract

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Primary Hepatic Lymphoma: An often Missed Diagnosis

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Background: Primary hepatic lymphoma (PHL) is a rare form of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma that causes significant diagnostic difficulties.

Case report: Male 85-Year-Old Hospitalized for fatigue, weight loss, and eventually jaundice. Ultrasound evidence, fully confirmed by CT: "Enlarged liver, with subverted ultrasound structure due to multiple hypoechoic nodules of various sizes, spread over the entire parenchyma, which may be referred to secondary lesions". After a long series of investigations, only the liver biopsy allowed the definitive diagnosis of PHL.

Discussion: Hepatic lymphoma can be distinguished into primary and secondary. To be classified as PHL, this disease must be confined to the liver and hilum lymphnodes, with no distant involvement (spleen, bone marrow, or other lymphoid sites). PHL is rare. Symptoms are non-specific, as are laboratory and instrumental tests and imaging techniques. Due to the low incidence and the absence of specific symptoms, patients with PHL often go through a long and frustrating diagnostic process before arriving at a definitive diagnosis, which is often missed. A differential diagnosis with other space-occupying liver lesions should be made. Liver biopsy, often performed late, is the investigation that allows the right diagnosis, also supported by the absence of extrahepatic lymphoproliferative involvement.