Images In Medicine: Infected Giant Bulla, An Unusual Presentation Of Lymphangioleiomyomatosis
C Padalino, C Sabella, F Toso, E Lugatti, C Paolillo, R Sbrojavacca

Citation

Abstract
Lymphangioleiomyomatosis (LAM) is a rare disease characterized by progressive cystic destruction of lungs. Giant bulla is rarely found in patient with LAM. We report an unusual presentation of LAM with infected giant bulla.

A 40-year-old female non-smoker presented to the ED with non productive cough and fever of 4 days duration. There was no associated chest pain, hemoptysis or dyspnea.

She had no significant medical history.

Her vital signs were as follows: blood pressure 110/60 mmHg, pulse 100 beats/min, respiratory rate 22 breaths/min and temperature 37.5°C. Oxygen saturation was 92% in room air.

There were decreased breath sounds particularly on the right side. The rest of the examination was unremarkable.

Laboratory analysis yielded leucocytosis (13,500 cells/ul) and increased PCR (250 mg/dl). Arterial blood analysis revealed that her PaO2 was 55 mmHg and pCO2 32 mmHg.

Chest radiography showed bilateral hyperinflation and a large hypertransparent image with two fluid levels in the upper lobe of the right hemithorax.

A HRCT revealed multiple round thin walled cysts uniformly distributed throughout the lungs with minimal normal parenchyma and fluid containing giant cyst (size 15 x 10 cm), occupying the superior half of the right hemithorax. Pneumothorax and pleural effusions were not observed (Fig.1).

A lung biopsy was performed and the pathologic analysis enabled us to confirm the diagnosis of lymphangioleiomyomatosis (LAM).

LAM is a rare multisystem disorder that occurs predominantly in women of reproductive age and typically presents with progressive dyspnea or pneumothorax.¹ ²

The peculiar presentation of our patients was a fever with radiologic evidence of infection in a large bulla within advanced diffuse cystic lung disease.

To our knowledge, infected giant bulla, common complication of pulmonary emphysema³, has not previously been reported in association of LAM particularly at clinical presentation.

References
Author Information

Cristiano Padalino, MD
Emergency department, University Hospital “Santa Maria della Misericordia”

Concetta Maria Sabella, M.D.
Radiology department, University Hospital “Santa Maria della Misericordia”

Francesco Toso, M.D.
Radiology department, University Hospital “Santa Maria della Misericordia”

Emilio Lugatti, M.D.
Pneumology department, University Hospital “Santa Maria della Misericordia”

Ciro Paolillo, M.D.
Emergency department, University Hospital “Santa Maria della Misericordia”

Rodolfo Sbrojavacca, M.D.
Emergency department, University Hospital “Santa Maria della Misericordia”