Advances in
Nursing and Health Sciences
Volume 2, Issue 2

Case Report

A Case of Mammary Schwannoma Originated from the Pectoral Muscle Nerve

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Introduction:

Schwannoma, also called neurilemmoma, neurinoma, a kind of a slow-growing benign neoplasm [1,2,3]. Schwannoma has a predilection for the head, neck, and extensor surfaces of the upper and lower extremities [4]. They can arise from Schwann cells of any nerve in any organ.

However, 2.6% of schwannnomas occur in the breast. Schwannoma is a clearly-bordered painful tumor and rare to arise within breast parenchyma. Fibroadenoma is a common benign breast tumor with also clearly bordered image. We experienced a case of schwannoma originated from the pectral muscle nerve, and it was difficult to distinguish preoperatively from a fibroadenoma of breast.

Case presentation

A 58-year-old woman complained right breast pain. We palpated a tumor in the right breast of the upper outer quardrant, 2cm in diameter, oval shape and elastic soft in texture. US showed a mass, oval and smooth, clearly bordered, suggesting a fibroadenoma (Fig.1). FNAC (Fine needle aspiration cytology) expressived fatty cells and fibrous cells as well as stromal cells, with uncomfirmed ductal cells (Fig.2). We reported 'inadequate specimen'.

MMG showed a mass, regular and oval shaped, on the edge of the breast (Fig.3).

The tumor extirpated in order to confirm the histology of breast tumor. The tumor was easily exfoliated from the greater pectoral muscle under the mammary glands. The tumor, measuring 2.9×2.4×1.6cm in size, appeared to be covered by a capsule, and yellowish in color. The pathological examination revealed tumor cells were spindle in shape, and had oval or elliptical nuclei. The tumor showed nuclear palisadings (Antoni A) and paucicellular areas (Antoni B) in part (Fig.4).

Re-examination of MMG indicated a schwannoma originated from the pectoral muscle nerve. Retrospectively, the findings of FNAC specimen were not in contradiction in a schwanoma of Antoni B, although we could not confirm the findings of Antoni A. The mammary schwannoma should be taken into account in the cytological diagnosis of patient with a painful tumor with clear borders.

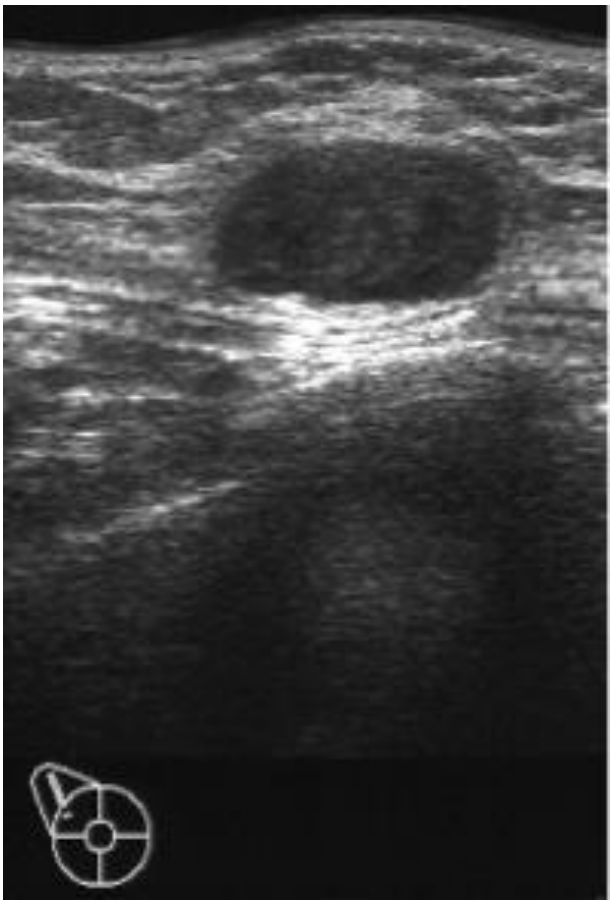

Fig. 1. Ultrasonography.

Oval and smooth, clearly bordered, suggesting a fibroadenoma.

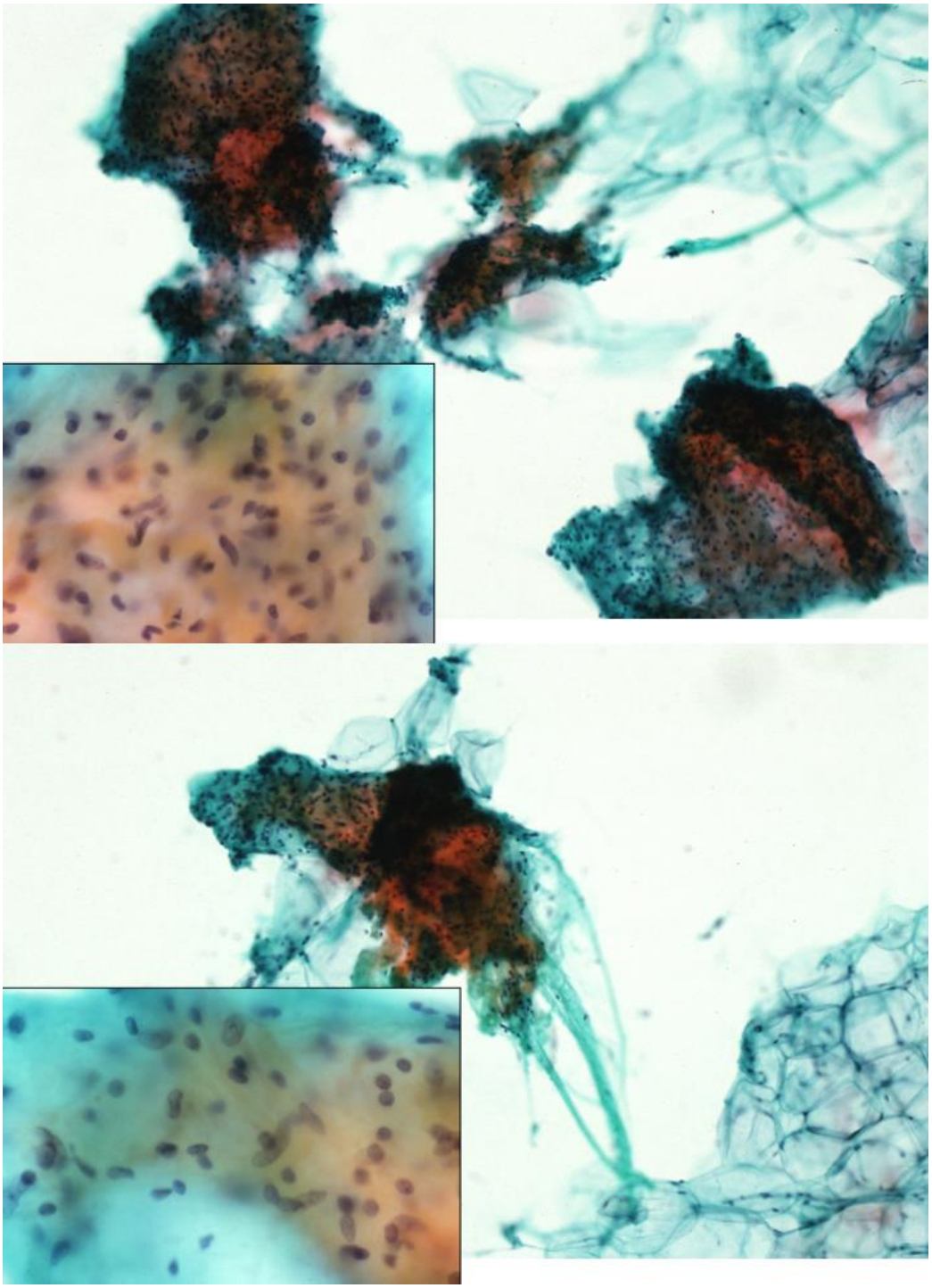

Fig.2. Cytology (FNAC).

There are fatty cells and fibrous cells as well as stromal cells. No ductal cells were found in the specimens.

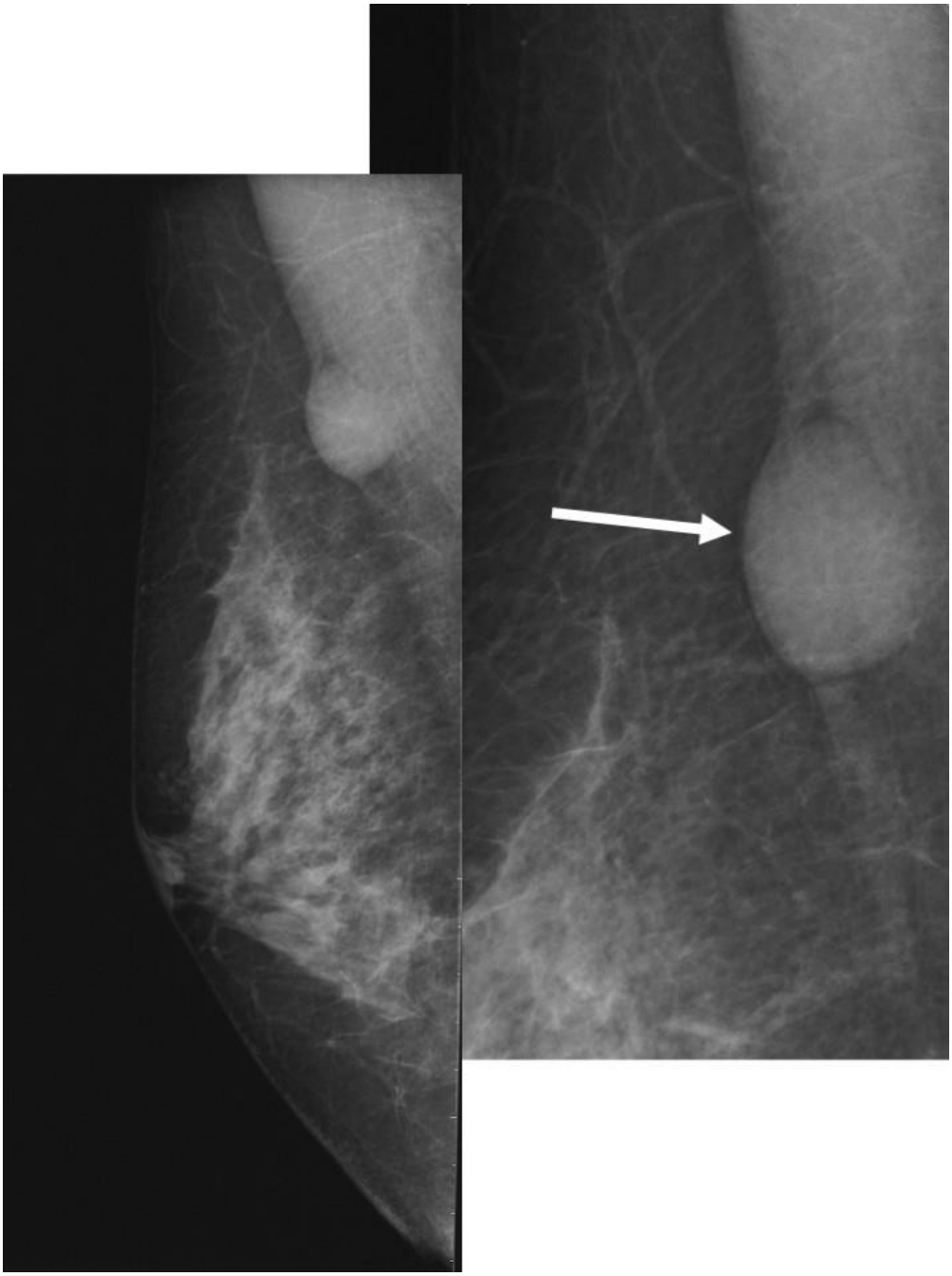

Fig.3. Mammography.

A shaped and round mass was observed, on the edge of the breast.

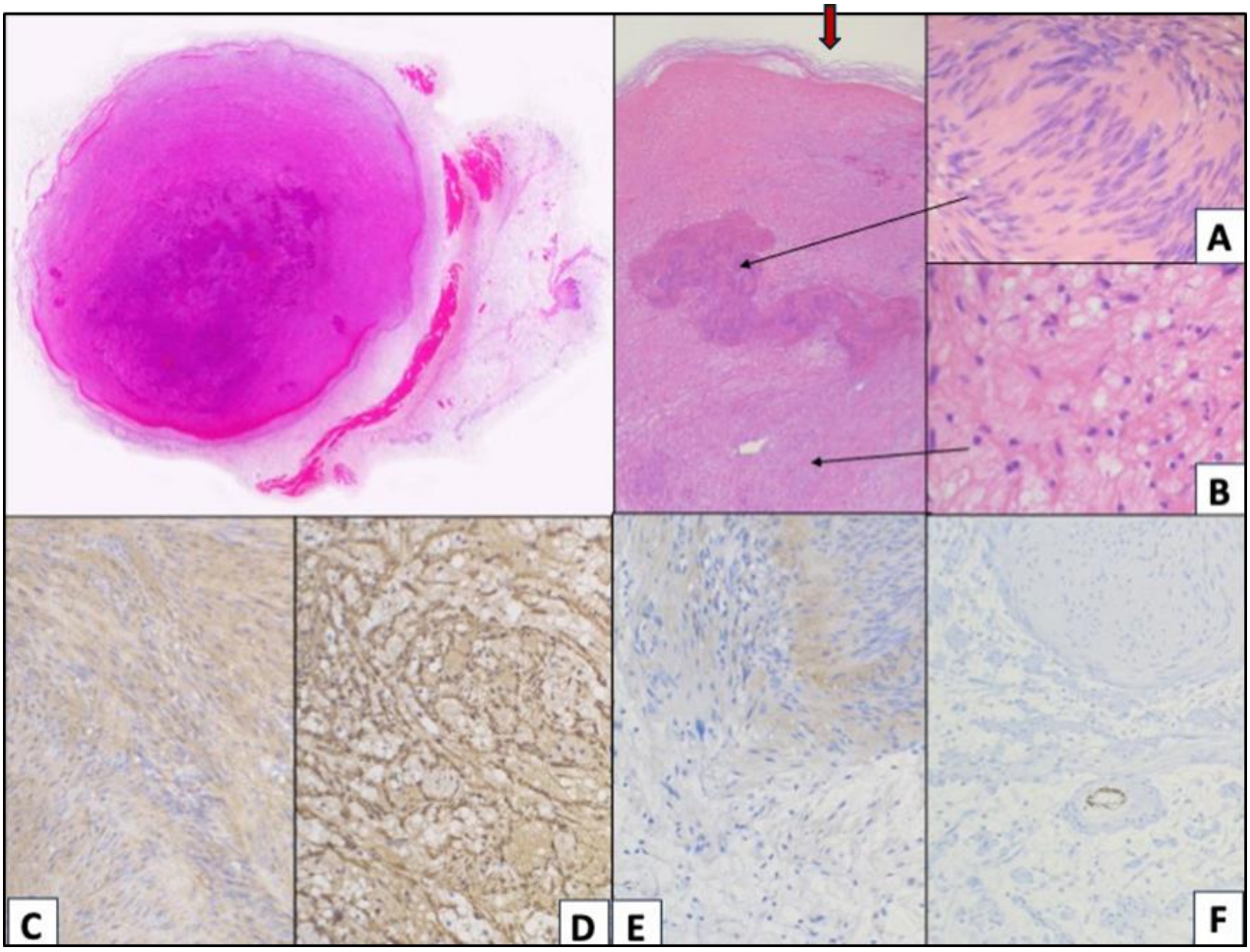

Fig.4. Pathology.

Tumor size, 2.9x2.4x1.6 cm.

Tumor was encapsulated by fibers (⬇).

A) Part of Antoni A (HE).
B) Part of Antoni B (HE).
C) S-100 (+) (part of Antoni A)
D) S-100 (+) (part of Antoni B)
E) NSE (-) (Antoni A and B)
F) SMA (-) (Smooth Muscle Actin) (-) (Antoni A and B)

Discussion

Schwannomas are derived from Schwann cells that form the myelin sheath of nerves, which facilitates the transmission of an impulse [5]. A schwannoma is a slow-growing tumor that develops in the peripheral nerves or spinal roots [5]. Any part of the body can be affected, but intramammary localization is rare. Breast schwannomas account for only 2.6% of all schwann incidence of 0.2% of all breast cancer cases [1,2].omas, with an incidence of 0.2% of all breast cancer cases [1,2].

Pathologically, schwannomas have 2 components, known as Antoni A tissue and B tissue, in variable proportions, and these spindle cells show nuclear palisading and parallel arrays are known as Verocay bodies [5]. In addition, schwannomas express S- 100 protein on immunochemistry findings. Similarly, on pathological diagnosis of the present schwannoma case, the spindle cell was a vague palisading pattern that resembled a Verocay body and S-100 was positive.

Clinically, a breast schwannoma is considered that has a very low risk of malignant transformation [6]. Therefore, core-needle biopsy should be performed for pathological diagnosis and for the purpose of treatment because of the recurrent nature of the breast tumor.

By the way, what about preoperative FNAC. Table 1 shows the classification used in Japan (Table 1). The classification is based on the Bethesda system for cellular diagnosis. If we follow this system faithfully, the epithelial component was not collected in this case, and the specimen would have been deemed inadequate. However, instead of no epithelial component, a strangely large amount of mesenchymal cellular component was collected. In retrospect, this should have been the focus of attention.The high stromal component of the stroma also differentiates it from fibroadenoma, but note that the cellular morphology differs from the stroma of fibroadenoma.

Breast schwannoma is a peripheral nerve sheath tumor in these nerves. Ogose et al [7] reported that only 5/99 (5%) patients with benign schwannomas experienced pain at rest. In contrast, 94/99 (95%) patients with benign peripheral nerve sheath tumor had pain induced by pressure. In conclusion, we report a case of breast schwannoma, which is a rare tumor and its characteristics. This neoplasm is very difficult to differentiate due to its morphological features and location. It is important to recognize this tumor based on physical examination and imaging findings. And after the image test, always cytologic and pathologic findings should confirm the type of tumor. Furthermore, even if no epithelial component is seen in FNAC it is necessary to focus on other cellular components that are frequently sampled.

Table. 1. Diagnostic report forms of fine needle aspiration cytology, for Breast.

Inadequate	No cells, No ductal cells
Adequate	No malignancy or benign (Mastopathy, cyst, fibroadenoma, etc)
	Indeterminate (Difficult to differentiate benign proliferative lesions from malignant lesions).
	Suspicious for malignancy (Difficult to determine due to a small number of cells suspected to be malignant).
	Malignancy

Reporting format established by the Japanese Society for Clinical Cytology.

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(This case is from 2004 and the author was working in the department of pathology, Kyorin University hospital at the time. Deepest thanks to all the staff of the department at the time.)

Citation: Natsuko Mizutani, Arch Med Clin Case Stud, *"A Case of Mammary Schwannoma Originated from the Pectoral Muscle Nerve"*. 2024; 2(1): 114

Received Date: May 18, 2024; Published Date: May 30, 2024