Visible Lymphadenopathy in Kikuchi-Fujimoto Disease

An otherwise healthy 11-year-old Japanese boy presented with a 3-week history of a right neck mass. Except for mild fatigue, he did not display any associated general symptoms, including fever, night sweats, or weight loss. Physical examination demonstrated a prominent tender cervical lymphadenopathy in the posterior cervical triangle (**Figure 1**). Blood tests reported leukopenia and mildly elevated lactate dehydrogenase and aminotransferase levels. Over the following 2 weeks, his lymph nodes enlarged and his fatigue worsened; thus, we performed a cervical lymph-node excisional biopsy that revealed increased CD 68+ histiocytes, lymphocytes, and immunoblasts in the cortices with abundant karyorrhectic debris (**Figure 2**); these findings were compatible with Kikuchi-Fujimoto disease (KFD). At the 1-month follow-up, the patient's symptoms had improved without any intervention.

KFD is a rare, self-limited disease of unknown etiology that was first described and commonly observed in Asian individuals.[1] Given its clinical and pathologic similarities with lymphoma, excluding this condition is important in the evaluation of KFD.[1] The hallmark of KFD is lymphadenopathy on the posterior cervical triangle, which is observed in 90% of cases.[2] In our patient, enlarged posterior cervical lymph nodes were not only palpable, but were clearly visible, which resembled the classic Winterbottom sign observed in African trypanosomiasis.[3] Because large lymphadenopathy can be an ominous sign of lymphoma,[4] biopsy should be considered in patients with clearly visible posterior cervical lymphadenopathy and thought given to other rare entities, such as KFD or trypanosomiasis. ■

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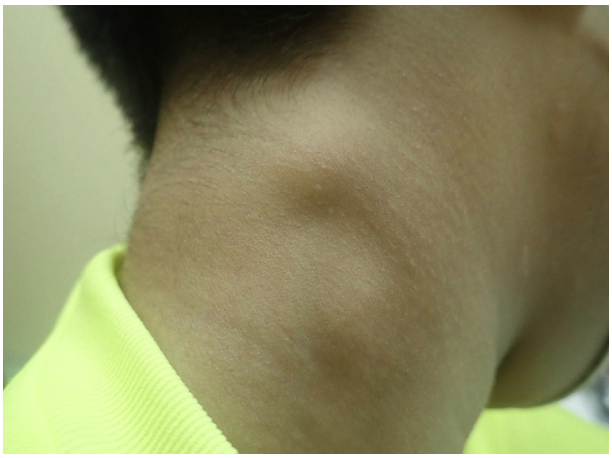

Figure 1. Visible right cervical lymphadenopathies in the posterior cervical triangle.

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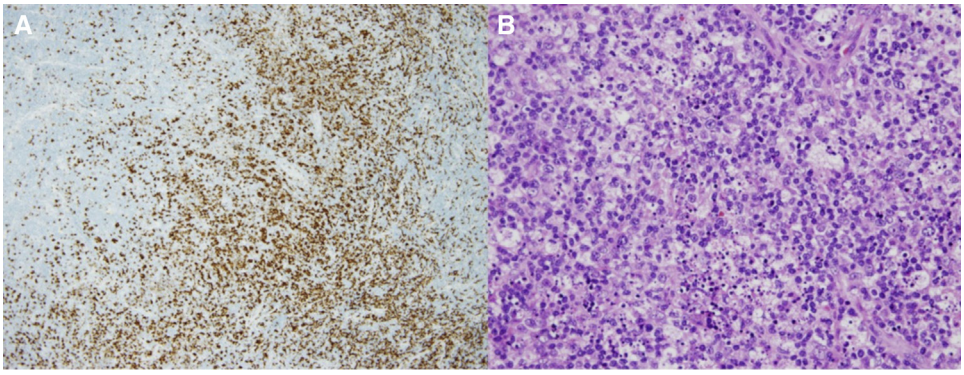

Figure 2. Cervical lymph-node excisional biopsies revealed increased CD 68+ histiocytes, **A,** lymphocytes, **B,** and immunoblasts in the cortices with abundant karyorrhectic debris.

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