

Pattern of distribution of AIDS-related Kaposi's sarcoma lesions in HIV patients in a referral hospital in Kenya

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Abstract

Background: Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) is an angioproliferative malignancy caused by infection with human herpes virus -8 (HHV-8). The tumour has four subtypes including Classic KS, African- endemic, Iatrogenic and Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)-related KS. AIDS- related KS is the most common malignancy in patients with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection and has variable clinical presentation with diverse distribution of lesions.

Objective: To assess the pattern of distribution of KS lesions in patients with AIDS-related KS at Kenyatta National Hospital.

Methods: We carried out a descriptive study on patients with HIV infection with histological diagnosis of KS. The study commenced upon approval by KNH-University of Nairobi Ethics and Research Committee. Following consent, clinical and demographic data was obtained from participants through verbal interviews and from medical records using a data capture form. Follow up was until 10 weeks. Management of patients was at the discretion of the attending clinician. Data was analyzed by a statistician using Instat Biostatistics program.

Results Seventy-four participants aged between 13 to 55 years were enrolled into the study. Males were 42 (56.7%) and females 32 (43.2%). Mean age was 36.8 years. The distribution of KS lesions was variable. We demonstrate high predilection of lesions for skin and lymph nodes at 62.6%. Other sites were involved were the oral cavity 14.9%. Twenty-eight (38%) of the participants had multifocal lesions with a male predominance in skin and viscera with male to female ratio of skin 1.8:1 and viscera 7:1 respectively.

Conclusion: We demonstrate reduced male: female ratio and multifocal distribution of AIDS-related KS lesions with predominance in skin and lymph nodes and male predominance in visceral lesions. Future studies should aim to determine what favours increase in, KS in women and visceral lesions in males among patients with HIV infection.

Keywords: Kaposi's Sarcoma, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

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