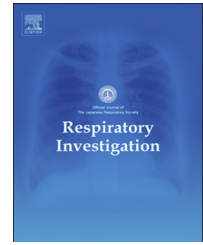




Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Respiratory Investigation

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/resinv

Case report

Fulminant hepatic failure and hepatomegaly caused by diffuse liver metastases from small cell lung carcinoma: 2 autopsy cases

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 7 September 2012

Received in revised form

17 December 2012

Accepted 28 December 2012

Available online 26 February 2013

Keywords:

Fulminant hepatic failure (FHF)

Small cell lung carcinoma (SCLC)

Liver metastasis

Hepatomegaly

ABSTRACT

Fulminant hepatic failure (FHF) is defined as a liver disease that causes encephalopathy within 8 weeks of onset in the absence of pre-existing liver disease. Although liver metastases are commonly found in cancer patients, FHF secondary to diffuse liver infiltration is rare. Here, we report the rare autopsy cases of patients with small cell lung carcinoma (SCLC) and secondary FHF. These patients presented with remarkable hepatomegaly and a near complete replacement of the liver parenchyma with metastatic tumor. Neoplastic involvement of the liver should be considered in the differential diagnosis of FHF.

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1. Introduction

Globally, lung cancer is the most common human malignancy and the leading cause of cancer deaths, with 1.6 million newly diagnosed cases and 1.378 million deaths annually (International Agency for Research on Cancer). Small cell lung carcinomas (SCLCs) account for 25% of diagnosed lung carcinomas. Approximately 70% of newly diagnosed SCLC patients initially present with an advanced disease stage [1,2].

Fulminant hepatic failure (FHF) is a liver disease that causes encephalopathy within 8 weeks of symptom onset in patients without prior liver disease. FHF's most commonly

result from viral hepatitis or drug toxicity and not from primary or metastatic carcinomas [3–6].

Although the liver is one of the most common metastatic sites for SCLC, mild to moderate liver disorder is often the only outcome. Liver disorders ranging from acute hepatic failure to FHF are rarely caused by diffuse parenchymal infiltration of SCLC [1,7–9]. Because of highly progressed disease states, clinical courses are usually too short to identify the causes, resulting in multi-organ failure. Diagnosis of hepatic infiltration in such patients presenting with FHF is difficult. High degrees of suspicion are required if there is no evidence of the primary disease.

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