

Kikuchi's disease, also known as histiocytic necrotizing lymphadenopathy, is a rare, benign, (noncancerous, nonmalignant) disorder of the lymph nodes of young adults, predominantly of young women. This disorder is often mistaken for malignant lymphoma, especially cervical adenopathy because the symptoms are very similar. The lesions, or tissue anomalies, of this disorder cause the lymph nodes to become enlarged (lymphadenopathy), inflamed and painful. The exact cause of Kikuchi's disease is not known. Perhaps the primary threat is a misdiagnosis of a malignant lymphoma. The exact cause of Kikuchi's disease is not known (idiopathic). Many researchers suspect that a virus may cause this disorder. Others, however, believe that the disorder, like systemic lupus erythematosus, is a self-limited autoimmune condition. Autoimmune disorders are caused when the body's natural defenses against "foreign" or invading organisms begin to attack healthy tissue for unknown reasons.