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Giant Lumbosacral ependymoma

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A 52-year-old man presented with a 10-years history of low back pain. Two months before presentation, he had bladder dysfunction. On examination, there was a reduced range of movement of the lumbar spine without other neurologic deficits. CT images of the lumbosacral spine showed lysis of whole sacrum (Figure, A). Magnetic resonance (MR) imaging demonstrated a giant lumbosacral mass (Figure, B). Due to the extent of bone destruction, only decompression and subtotal removal (Figure, C) of the tumor could be performed and the patient was referred for local radiotherapy. Histological findings from the tissue removed during surgery showed myxopapillary ependymoma with a positive margin (Figure, D). He had no low back pain at the last follow-up examination and has resumed full activities with normal bowel, bladder, and sexual function.

Myxopapillary ependymomas are slow-growing tumors that may attain very large sizes before clinical detection, occasionally filling and expanding the lumbosacral canal and causing much osteolytic destruction of the sacrum (1,3). The early, complete resection of myxopapillary ependymomas is associated with an excellent prognosis for long-term disease control. Close postoperative MR imaging monitoring of the surgical site is required and radiation therapy is certainly a prerequisite for patients with incomplete tumor excision and/or recurrent disease (2,4,5).

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Figure legend

Figure A: Sagittal CT images (c) showing extent of bone..

Figure B: Sagittal T2 MRI showed hyper-intense lesion extending through L3-L4 disc into the whole of sacrum, this tumor had endopelvic extending and pushing the rectum and the bladder forwardly.

Figure C: Postoperative Sagittal T2 MRI showed subtotal removal of the tumor

Figure D: Histological examination of the tissue removed during the surgery showed that the myxoid area was positioned between small vessels, around which small tumor cells aggregated. The tumor cells were positive for glial fibrillary acidic protein. **(Up)** H&E, ×100. **(Down)** Glial fibrillary acidic protein, ×100.