

Hashimoto's Thyroiditis presenting as Unilateral Subacute Thyroiditis: A Case Report

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Objective: To report that lymphocytic thyroiditis can present with a clinical course of subacute thyroiditis with unilateral decreased uptake on scintigraphy.

Case Report: We report a case of a 68 year old woman with a clinical course of subacute thyroiditis, presenting as fever, lymphadenopathy, neck pain with a tender left anterior neck mass on physical examination. A thyroid ultrasound at 5 weeks from onset of symptoms revealed a solid left thyroid mass, for which thyroidectomy was initially contemplated.

She had normal thyroid function tests and normal levels of anti-TPO and anti-thyroglobulin. Gray scale and color doppler ultrasound of the thyroid at the 8th week of illness revealed a large heterogeneous mass measuring 4.87 x 3.00 x 2.02 cm almost completely occupying the left thyroid lobe, (Left thyroid lobe size was 5.54x2.25x2.01cm). On thyroid scintigraphy, on the 10th week of illness, the left lobe was barely visualized. The thyroid uptake was decreased at 2 hours and 24 hours. Fine needle aspiration biopsy revealed findings consistent with lymphocytic thyroiditis. On clinical observation, at the 14th week of illness, the left thyroid mass and pain subsided as the right thyroid began to enlarge and became painful and tender. The right thyroid mass and pain subsided and eventually resolved on the 18th week from onset of symptoms.

Conclusion: Hashimoto's thyroiditis may present clinically as subacute thyroiditis with unilateral features on ultrasound and thyroid scan. Critical interpretation of clinical course, sonographic findings and thyroid scintigraphy are essential in the diagnosis.