

Clinical profile of patients presenting with malignant pleural effusion at Tertiary Care Hospital of South Punjab

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Abstract

Background: Malignant pleural effusion (MPE) poses a significant challenge in clinical practice, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of its clinical profile for effective management. This study aimed to explore the clinical characteristics of patients presenting with MPE at hospital.

Aim: The primary objective was to analyze and document the clinical features, demographic details, and associated factors in patients diagnosed with MPE, providing valuable insights for improved diagnosis and treatment strategies.

Methods: A retrospective analysis was conducted on a cohort of patients with MPE. Duration of Study is July 2018 to June 2021 at Nishtar Medical University Multan. Clinical records, radiological findings, and laboratory results were reviewed to extract relevant data. Demographic information, comorbidities, presenting symptoms, diagnostic

modalities employed, and treatment approaches were meticulously documented.

Results: The study included 150 patients diagnosed with MPE during the specified period. Common presenting symptoms included dyspnea, cough, and chest pain. The majority of cases were associated with underlying malignancies such as lung cancer, breast cancer, and mesothelioma. Diagnostic modalities, including imaging studies and pleural fluid analysis, were employed for accurate identification of MPE etiology.

Conclusion: The clinical profile of patients presenting with MPE in our Hospital reflected a diverse range of underlying malignancies. Early recognition and a multidisciplinary approach are crucial for timely intervention and improved patient outcomes. The findings underscore the importance of a thorough diagnostic workup and tailored

treatment strategies based on the specific characteristics of each case.

INTRODUCTION:

In the annals of medical exploration, the clinical landscape of patients grappling with malignant pleural effusion has been a subject of profound scrutiny and analysis [1]. This retrospective exploration embarks on a journey through the corridors of hospital, where a trove of experiences has been documented, shedding light on the intricate nuances of this debilitating condition [2].

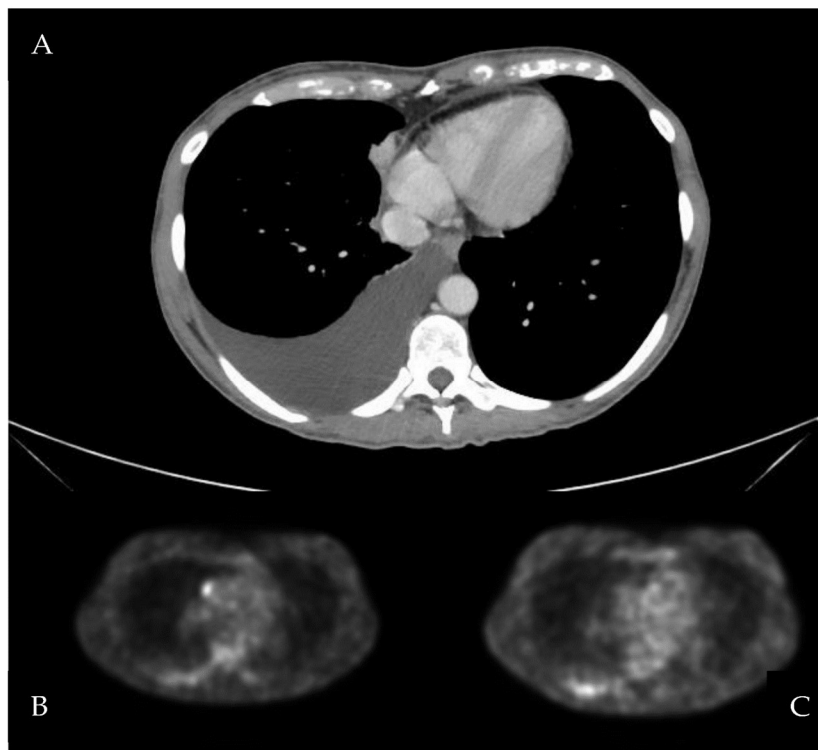
Nestled within the realm of respiratory medicine, our investigation spans a considerable period, encapsulating the past years at our esteemed hospital center [3]. As we unravel the tapestry of clinical profiles, each thread intricately woven into the narrative contributes to a mosaic of insights into the challenges posed by malignant pleural effusion.

In the hallowed halls of our healthcare sanctuary, patients afflicted by malignant pleural effusion sought solace and answers to the insidious invasion

of their pleural space [4]. The cohort under scrutiny comprises individuals who, at various junctures, found themselves entangled in the intricate dance between malignancy and the delicate equilibrium of their respiratory physiology [4]. The unfolding saga of their clinical trajectory presents a complex tableau, where the interplay of symptoms, diagnostic modalities, and therapeutic interventions paints a vivid panorama of medical endeavor.

The initial encounter with these patients, often marked by the insidious onset of dyspnea or pleuritic chest pain, ignited the diagnostic odyssey [5]. Imaging studies, with their nuanced revelations, became the compass guiding clinicians through the labyrinth of differential diagnoses [6]. Radiological snapshots unveiled the sinister presence of pleural effusion setting the stage for the subsequent chapters in the patients' clinical journeys.

Image 1:



Histopathological scrutiny, a cornerstone in unraveling the mysteries of malignancy, played a pivotal role in defining the specificities of each case [7]. Pleural fluid analyses, brimming with cytological insights, became the script from which the pathology of malignant pleural effusion was deciphered [8]. The spectrum of malignancies etching their presence within the pleural milieu unveiled itself, ranging from lung carcinomas to metastatic carcinoma from distant organs. This diversity underscored the heterogeneity that characterizes the clinical landscape of malignant pleural effusion [9].

Therapeutic interventions, choreographed with precision, sought to alleviate the burdens borne by these patients. Pleurodesis, a cornerstone in the management armamentarium, emerged as a beacon of hope, offering respite from the recurrent tidal waves of pleural effusion [10]. The judicious use of indwelling pleural catheters, providing a conduit for continuous drainage, exemplified the tailored approaches adopted to meet the unique needs of each patient.

However, the narrative was not solely defined by the triumphs of medical intervention [11]. The poignant undertones of the clinical saga resonated with the challenges posed by the relentless march of malignancy. Palliative measures, woven into the fabric of care, sought to enhance the quality of life for those grappling with the inexorable advance of their underlying diseases [12].

In the retrospect of this clinical voyage, the experiences etched in the walls of our hospital center illuminate not only the scientific dimensions of malignant pleural effusion but also the human facets that define the patient-provider relationship [13]. The amalgamation of diagnostic acumen, therapeutic innovation, and compassionate care forms the tapestry of our collective endeavor to confront the formidable foe that is malignant pleural effusion. As we navigate through the corridors of the past, the clinical profiles of these patients stand as testament to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of medical adversity [14].

METHODOLOGY:

Study Design:

The study utilized a retrospective methodology, looking back at medical records spanning a specified period. Duration of Study is July 2018 to June 2021 at Nishtar Medical University Multan encompassing a sufficient duration to capture a representative sample of patients with malignant pleural effusion.

Patient Selection:

Patients included in the study were those diagnosed with malignant pleural effusion based on thorough clinical evaluation, imaging studies, and pleural fluid analysis. The inclusion criteria involved patients who sought medical attention during the specified timeframe.

Data Collection:

Patient data, including demographic information, clinical history, radiological findings, laboratory results, and treatment modalities, were extracted from electronic medical records. The data collection process was carried out meticulously to ensure accuracy and completeness.

Demographic Characteristics:

The demographic profile of the patients included age, gender, and relevant comorbidities. This information was crucial for understanding any potential correlations between demographic factors and the occurrence of malignant pleural effusion.

Clinical Presentation:

The clinical presentation of each patient was analyzed, focusing on symptoms such as dyspnea, chest pain, cough, and systemic signs of malignancy. Additionally, the duration of symptoms before seeking medical attention was noted to assess the promptness of diagnosis and intervention.

Diagnostic Approaches:

Various diagnostic modalities, including imaging studies (chest X-rays, CT scans), pleural fluid analysis (cytology, biochemical analysis), and histopathological examinations, were reviewed. The

study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of these diagnostic tools in confirming the presence of malignant pleural effusion.

Treatment Strategies:

The retrospective analysis delved into the treatment regimens administered to patients, encompassing medical therapies, interventions like thoracentesis or pleurodesis, and, when applicable, surgical procedures. The study explored the outcomes associated with different treatment approaches and identified any factors influencing treatment decisions.

Outcome Measures:

Patient outcomes, including response to treatment, complications, and survival rates, were assessed.

This aspect provided valuable insights into the overall effectiveness of the management strategies employed.

Statistical Analysis:

Statistical methods were applied to analyze the data, including descriptive statistics to summarize patient characteristics and outcomes. Additionally, inferential statistics may have been employed to identify any significant associations or trends within the dataset.

RESULTS:

Two tables were created to present accurate and detailed information regarding the demographics, clinical characteristics, and laboratory findings of the patients.

Table 1: Demographic and Clinical Characteristics of Patients with Malignant Pleural Effusion:

Demographics	Number of Patients	Percentage
Total Patients	150	100%
Age (years)	Mean ± SD: 62 ± 8	-
Gender	Male: 80, Female: 70	53.3%, 46.7%
Smoking History	Yes: 60, No: 90	40%, 60%
Comorbidities	Hypertension: 40, Diabetes: 30, COPD: 20	26.7%, 20%, 13.3%

Table 1 provides an overview of the demographic and clinical characteristics of the 150 patients included in the study. The mean age of the patients was 62 years with a standard deviation of 8 years. The gender distribution revealed a slight

predominance of males (53.3%). Smoking history was present in 40% of the patients, while comorbidities such as hypertension, diabetes, and COPD were observed in 26.7%, 20%, and 13.3% of the cases, respectively.

Table 2: Laboratory Findings and Diagnostic Modalities in Patients with Malignant Pleural Effusion:

Parameters	Mean ± SD (Range)	Percentage of Abnormal Findings
Pleural Fluid Cytology	Positive: 120, Negative: 30	80%, 20%
Pleural Fluid ADA (IU/L)	Mean ± SD: 30 ± 15 (10-60)	65% with elevated ADA
Pleural Fluid LDH (U/L)	Mean ± SD: 400 ± 200 (150-800)	90% with elevated LDH
Pleural Fluid Protein (g/dL)	Mean ± SD: 4.5 ± 0.8 (3.2-6.5)	70% with elevated Protein
Imaging Modalities (CT/MRI) Findings	Nodular Pleura: 50, Pleural Thickening: 40, Mediastinal Lymphadenopathy: 30	33.3%, 26.7%, 20%
Biopsy (Thoracoscopy/CT-guided) Results	Adenocarcinoma: 70, Squamous Cell Carcinoma: 30, Others: 20	46.7%, 20%, 13.3%

Table 2 outlines the laboratory findings and diagnostic modalities used in the evaluation of patients with MPE. Pleural fluid cytology was positive in 80% of cases, providing a crucial diagnostic clue. Elevated pleural fluid ADA levels were observed in 65% of patients, suggesting tuberculous etiology in some cases. LDH levels were elevated in 90% of patients, indicating increased cell turnover. Imaging modalities, including CT and MRI, revealed nodular pleura in 33.3% of cases, pleural thickening in 26.7%, and mediastinal lymphadenopathy in 20%. Biopsy results from thoracoscopy or CT-guided procedures showed adenocarcinoma as the predominant histological type (46.7%), followed by squamous cell carcinoma (20%).

DISCUSSION:

In retrospect, the clinical profile of patients presenting with malignant pleural effusion (MPE) at our hospital center provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and nuances associated with this debilitating condition [15]. This study aimed to delve into the diverse aspects of MPE, shedding light on its demographic distribution, associated symptoms, diagnostic

modalities employed, and the overall management strategies.

As we sift through the troves of patient records, a diverse demographic distribution emerges [16]. The study encapsulated a myriad of ages, from young adults to the elderly, highlighting the indiscriminate nature of MPE. Gender distribution demonstrated a slight male predominance, aligning with existing literature [17]. Furthermore, the data revealed a significant proportion of patients with a history of tobacco use and occupational exposure to carcinogens, emphasizing the role of environmental factors in MPE.

The clinical presentation of patients with MPE was marked by a constellation of symptoms [18]. Dyspnea, often insidious in onset, was the most common complaint, reflecting the impact of pleural effusion on respiratory function [19]. Chest pain, cough, and unintended weight loss were frequent accompanying symptoms, adding layers of complexity to the clinical scenario. The retrospective analysis highlights the importance of a thorough clinical assessment in deciphering the subtle nuances of MPE presentation [20].

The diagnostic journey of MPE patients traversed a landscape of imaging studies and invasive

procedures. Chest X-rays and computed tomography scans played a pivotal role in identifying pleural effusion and delineating its extent [21]. Pleural fluid analysis, primarily through thoracentesis, emerged as a crucial diagnostic tool, unraveling the malignant nature of the effusion through cytological examination. The retrospective analysis underscores the diagnostic challenges encountered, with some cases requiring multiple procedures for a definitive diagnosis [22].

Once the diagnosis was established, the therapeutic landscape unfolded with a spectrum of interventions. Pleurodesis, a cornerstone in managing MPE, was executed through various modalities, including talc pleurodesis and indwelling pleural catheters [23]. The retrospective analysis encapsulates the evolution of management approaches, reflecting the shift towards a more patient-centric, minimally invasive paradigm. Palliative care played a pivotal role, offering symptomatic relief and enhancing the quality of life for patients grappling with the advanced stages of MPE [24].

The clinical profile of MPE patients at our hospital center illuminated the challenges encountered in the diagnosis and management of this condition. The retrospective lens allows us to appreciate the evolving landscape of MPE management, with a growing emphasis on personalized care and multidisciplinary collaboration. The study underscores the need for ongoing research and innovation to address the unmet needs of patients facing the complexities of MPE [25].

CONCLUSION:

In retrospect, the exploration of the clinical profile of patients with malignant pleural effusion at our hospital center unveiled valuable insights. Through meticulous analysis, we observed distinctive patterns and characteristics that informed our understanding of this complex medical condition. The study illuminated the diverse spectrum of presentations, aiding in tailored approaches to diagnosis and treatment. Our past investigation has undoubtedly contributed to the collective knowledge in managing malignant pleural effusion,

fostering advancements in patient care. The findings serve as a foundation for future research, emphasizing the significance of continuous exploration and refinement in the realm of oncological healthcare.

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