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Abstract

Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C are highly prevalent in Taiwan. Chronic hepatitis patients are at high risk for progression to liver cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). However, HCC associated with liver abscess is very rare. Accordingly, this study analyzed the characteristics of HCC patients with liver abscess to improve differential diagnosis of this condition. From January, 2005 through July, 2007, the medical records for nine HCC patients (four female, five male; mean age, 65.8 years) treated for abscess formation at Kaohsiung Medical University Hospital were retrospectively reviewed. Their clinical characteristics, images, managements, and outcomes were analyzed. Fever and highly elevated alkaline phosphatase were noted in all patients. All aspirate cultures revealed *Klebsiella pneumonia*. All cases of HCC were confirmed by cytology or pathology. The imaging studies, which included abdominal ultrasonography and computed tomography, revealed liver tumors in all patients. In some cases, lead-enhanced hypervascular areas were noted. The patients were treated with antibiotic therapy, transhepatic arterial chemoembolization, or surgery. The findings of this study indicate that focal liver inflammatory changes may mimic solid neoplasms. Differential diagnosis of HCC with abscess is extremely difficult and may require aspiration cytology or pathology.