



Case study

Adult retropharyngeal abscess

Tohru Tanigawa^{a,*}, Fumiya Kano^b, Daisuke Inukai^a, Tessei Kuruma^a^a Department of Otolaryngology, Aichi Medical University, Japan^b Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine, Japan

A 60-year-old man was referred to our hospital after complaining of throat pain for several days. He described the condition as a cold with sore throat. A physical examination revealed swelling of the posterior

wall of the oropharynx. Sagittal computed tomography revealed a 3 × 1 cm abscess with ring enhancement in the retropharyngeal space (Fig. 1). Therefore, he was diagnosed with a retropharyngeal abscess

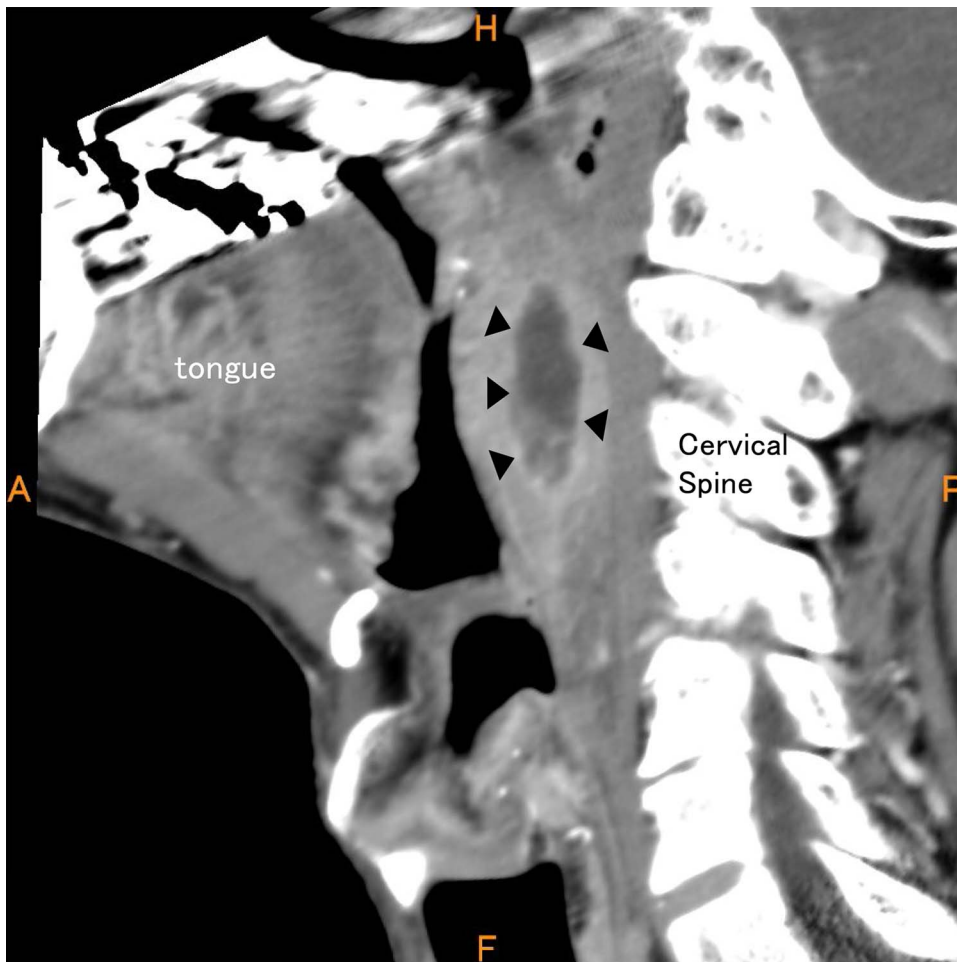


Fig. 1. CT scan of the neck (sagittal view). CT of the neck revealed a 3 × 1 cm abscess with ringed enhancement in the retropharyngeal space (triangle arrows).

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: tanigawa@aichi-med-u.ac.jp (T. Tanigawa).

[1]. Intraoral surgical drainage was performed under local anesthesia. Antimicrobials (meropenem hydrate) and corticosteroids were administered, and his symptoms disappeared 5 days later. On bacteriological examination, *Prevotella corporis* (anaerobic bacteria) was identified in the abscess.

The presence of a retropharyngeal abscess in an adult without any history of trauma or coexistent illness is unusual [2]. An infection of the retropharyngeal space can pass behind the esophagus into the mediastinum [3,4]. Therefore, “common cold accompanied with sore throat” may actually be a potentially life-threatening deep neck infection.

References

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