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Multiple pulmonary metastases from a pleomorphic adenoma of the parotid gland

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INTRODUCTION/OBJECTIVES: Pleomorphic adenomas are the most common salivary gland tumors and surgical therapy is the main method of treatment. However, there are rare reports in which these histologically benign tumors have metastasized to distant sites in an unexplained manner. Metastasizing pleomorphic adenoma (MPA) represents an extremely rare group of tumors. Although apparently benign, mortality in MPA can be as high as 22% (1). We describe a patient with a very rare case of pulmonary metastasis of pleomorphic adenoma of the parotid gland.

CASE PRESENTATION: A 53-year-old male patient was diagnosed with pleomorphic adenoma of the right parotid gland at the age of 30 years. Initial therapy included a right superficial parotidectomy. Nineteen years later, a palpable formation in the right infraauricular area was investigated. Recurrence of disease was confirmed, whereupon total parotidectomy followed by adjuvant radiotherapy in 27 fractions was performed. Recently, multiple bilateral infiltrations of the lung were suspected on preoperative radiological examination, which was confirmed by PET-CT and MSCT scans. Biopsy of the suspicious lesions revealed pulmonary metastases of pleomorphic adenoma. CITOREDUCTIVE therapy was initiated in 6 suspicious lesions. In short, nearly 90 infiltrations were present.

CONCLUSION: Although pleomorphic adenoma is a benign tumor, it can metastasize to regional lymph nodes and distant organs if inadequately treated. The high mortality rate of histologically defined benign disease that metastasizes requires careful primary excision and long-term clinical follow-up. The occurrence of metastases within the first 10 years after initial surgery and the presence of metastases at multiple sites are independent predictors of poor survival(3).