Postoperative Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis in an Adult Patient with High-Grade B-Cell Lymphoma: A Case Report

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ABSTRACT

Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis (HLH) is a rare and often fatal clinical syndrome that is frequently underdiagnosed due to a lack of specific clinical features. Malignancy-associated HLH (M-HLH) is a frequently encountered subtype of HLH in adults, with lymphoma being the most common underlying diagnosis; it carries a poor prognosis despite treatment. Surgery is an extremely rare trigger of HLH, which could, in part, be due to a wide range of known postoperative complications leading to underdiagnosis of postoperative HLH. We describe a case of an adult patient who presented with intestinal intussusception secondary to Burkitt or high-grade B-cell lymphoma that required hemicolectomy, followed by rapid postoperative deterioration, leading to the diagnosis of HLH. Postoperative HLH has a nonspecific presentation and shares features of other postoperative complications. However, due to the high risk of mortality if undiagnosed or untreated, considering and testing for HLH in unusual sepsis-like presentations is vital as treatment may improve survival chances.

Keywords: Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis, Lymphoma, postoperative complication

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