

Presentation

Multifocal Purple Lesions

[Purple Leeches with Focal Magnifying Glass](#)

Skin lesions of Kaposi's sarcoma may vary, but most patients have nontender, hyperpigmented, macular or nodular skin lesions. These skin lesions appear mainly in the extremities, but may appear elsewhere as well. Lesion pattern may vary by type of Kaposi Sarcoma. In HIV-associated Kaposi Sarcoma, nodules tend to appear on the upper body, head and neck. In Classic Kaposi Sarcoma hands and feet are usually first affected, and lesions may extend up the limbs. Iatrogenic (transplant-associated, or immunosuppression related) Kaposi Sarcoma has a similar pattern as Classic type, however mucosal involvement may be more extensive. Finally, in Endemic (African) Kaposi Sarcoma, lymphadenopathy tends to occur in mouth and face or in inguino-genital regions.

Skin

[Skin-Suit-Man](#)

Kaposi sarcoma most commonly affects the skin, mouth, GI tract, and respiratory tract; although manifestations vary widely. Most patients have lesions along skin tension lines.

Mucous Membranes

[Mucus](#)

In patients with suspected Kaposi sarcoma, you should examine the pharynx for lesions, especially the palate. Oral lesions occur in approximately one-third of patients and are predictors of pulmonary involvement and less favorable treatment outcomes.

Visceral Organs

[Lung and GI-Guy with Visceral-Visor](#)

Kaposi sarcoma most commonly affects the skin, mouth, GI tract, and respiratory tract. Patients with visceral involvement may be asymptomatic, or manifest with shortness of breath, painless rectal bleeding or melena, and other non-specific pulmonary and gastrointestinal symptoms. Kaposi sarcoma can cause serious problems when the lesions are in the lungs, liver, or digestive tract. Kaposi sarcoma in the digestive tract, for example, can cause bleeding, while tumors in the lungs may cause trouble breathing.

Diagnosis

Spindle-shaped Cells

[Spindle Cell](#)

Biopsy of skin lesions should be performed to confirm a diagnosis of Kaposi Sarcoma. Histological examination of Kaposi Sarcoma reveals predominantly lymphocytic inflammatory infiltrate, which can help distinguish Kaposi Sarcoma from bacillary angiomatosis. Additionally, spindle cell proliferation often occurs. A spindle cell is an elongated, spindle-shaped cell. In Kaposi Sarcoma, the spindle cells infiltrate through the collagen, forming slit-like spaces that may contain erythrocytes.

Management

Observation

[Observing Through a Telescope](#)

Sometimes, observation is recommended if a person's immune system is functioning well, and the KS lesions are small and not bothersome to the person.

Chemotherapy

[Chemo-Head-Wrap](#)

Chemotherapy (chemo) is the use of drugs to treat cancer. This is a type of systemic treatment for Kaposi sarcoma. Liposomal anthracyclines or paclitaxel are the drugs most often used for chemotherapy. Liposomal anthracyclines, such as Pegylated liposomal doxorubicin, are medications in

which the drug molecule is packaged in a liposome made of various lipids (the drugs are enclosed in tiny fat globules). Another systemic treatment option are immunomodulating agents; although their effect on the immune system isn't entirely clear. Three immunomodulating agents can be used to treat Kaposi sarcoma (KS); thalidomide, pomalidomide (Pomalyst), and lenalidomide (Revlimid). A local treatment such as radiation therapy, cryosurgery, surgical resection, intralesional chemotherapy, or a topical retinoid, may be used when there are just a few lesions in a very visible area (such as the face).

Treat Underlying Disorder

[Treating Disorders Under the Table](#)

In patients with AIDS, highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART), also known as combination antiretroviral therapy (cART), refers to the combinations of drugs that are used to keep HIV infections under control. HAART may be started to improve the patient's immune function and reduce the size of KS lesions. Similarly, in organ-transplant patients whose immune systems are suppressed by drugs, stopping, lowering or changing the drugs may be helpful.