

IMAGES IN OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGY

Lingual thyroid: an accidental finding

Tiroides lingual: un hallazgo casual

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Lingual thyroid is a rare clinical entity that occurs from a disturbance in the embryologic migration of the gland from the base of the tongue to the neck. We present a paediatric case diagnosed by chance.

Case: a 4-year-old girl with no personal history or significant illnesses who arrives at consultation due to irritative cough of 1 week of evolution and crisis of laryngeal cough in the last 24 h. She was admitted to the paediatric emergency service with a diagnosis of acute epiglottitis, with no fever or signs of breathing difficulty. She presented a good general condition status and normal O₂ saturation.

The initial examinations were not consistent with infection. In otolaryngologic observation, the endoscope showed a painless tumour in the midline of the tongue base (Figure 1). Cervical palpation was normal. Magnetic resource imaging (MRI) was requested, which objectified the lesion (Figure 2). The diagnosis of lingual thyroid was confirmed using scintigraphy with ^{99m}Tc (Figure 3). Thyroid function tests were consistent with compensated hypothyroidism. A treatment with thyroxine was initiated, which normalised thyrotropin values after 4 months. At present she is asymptomatic, with a stable tumour volume.

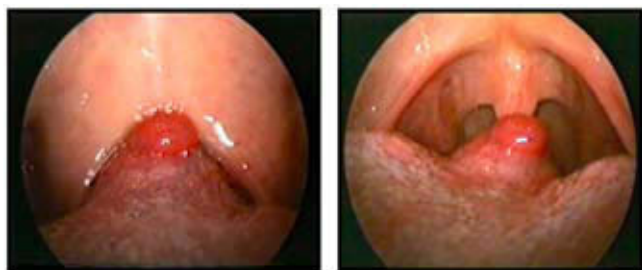


Figure 1 Endoscopic image. Purple tumour, soft and vascular in the midline of the tongue base, behind the circular papillae.



Figure 2 MRI: mass of 17 mm, well defined, with hypersignal in T1, isosignal in T2 and discrete capsular enhancement with gadolinium.

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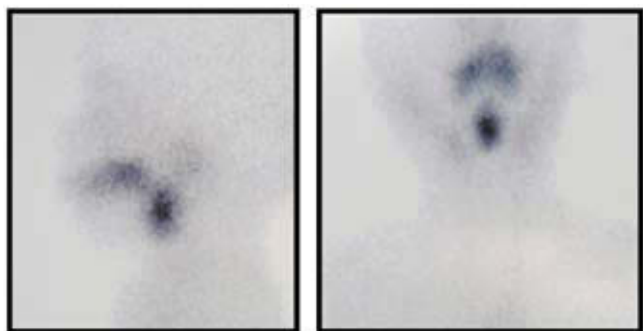


Figure 3 Scintigraphy with ^{99m}Tc : radionuclide uptake focus at the base of the tongue and with no apparent activity in the normal position of the gland in the neck.

Lingual thyroid should be suspected in cases of tumour in the posterior region of the tongue. It is important to pay attention to obstructive symptoms that reflect more severe clinical forms and are related to periods of high metabolic demand. In such cases, there is a risk of obstructive and functional clinical imbalance, so close monitoring is very important and surgery might have to be considered.