

# A Rare Case of Kikuchi-Fujimoto Disease in an Indian Female

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## Abstract

Kikuchi-Fujimoto disease is a self-limiting illness characterised by non-specific symptoms, most commonly reported symptoms being fever and lymphadenopathy. Unknown in its cause, Kikuchi-Fujimoto disease (KFD) is a benign, uncommon disorder usually presenting under the age of 30 years in women. This disease is mainly seen in Asian population mainly in Japan but it is rare in Indian population. The etiological cause of this disease remains unknown. This condition needs to be differentiated from other closely resembling conditions such as tuberculosis, lymphoma, Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) and adenocarcinoma. The physician needs to be aware about this condition to avoid misdiagnosis and improper treatment. This case report is about a female of age 26 years who was diagnosed as having Kikuchi Fujimoto Disease on the basis of clinical and biopsy findings.

## Keywords

Kikuchi-Fujimoto syndrome, Benign, Lymphoma, Tuberculosis, Lymphadenopathy

## Introduction

Kikuchi-Fujimoto disease also known as histiocytic necrotizing lymphadenitis, Kikuchi necrotizing lymphadenitis, phagocytic necrotizing lymphadenitis, subacute necrotizing lymphadenitis, and necrotizing lymphadenitis, was first described in 1972 in Japan by Dr Masahiro Kikuchi and by Y. Fujimoto independently.<sup>[1-5]</sup> Kikuchi-Fujimoto disease (KFD) is a rare, self-limiting disorder that typically affects the cervical lymph nodes.<sup>[1]</sup> The presentation of Kikuchi-Fujimoto disease is variable, and there is no specific set of symptoms or laboratory features that reliably establishes the diagnosis.<sup>[6]</sup> Although autoimmune reactions and unknown pathogenic organisms have been recognized as the main culprits, the aetiology of KFD is still unknown.<sup>[7]</sup> Kikuchi disease occurs sporadically in people with no family history of the condition.<sup>[5]</sup> Very few cases of Kikuchi-Fujimoto disease have been described in Indian patients. It is especially important to differentiate this condition from tuberculosis because of the high prevalence of tuberculosis in Indian population, close resemblance and different treatments. Other close differential diagnosis includes lymphoma and adenocarcinoma.<sup>[1]</sup> Despite over 50 years having passed, it is still difficult to identify KFD from other lymph node illnesses, which poses a serious danger of misdiagnosis and inappropriate therapy.<sup>[8]</sup> A physician needs to be aware of this condition to prevent misdiagnosis and inappropriate treatment. We hereby describe a case of Kikuchi-Fujimoto disease in a young adult female of Indian descent.

## Case Presentation

A 26-year-old Indian female who had no major prior medical history arrived at our outpatient department with complaints of fever and neck swelling that developed over a course of 30 days. She was treated at a local hospital with empirical antibiotics with no improvement of symptoms. No drug or alcohol use was reported. Family history was unremarkable. She was a home-maker from Madhya Pradesh and was married for 4 years. Initially, she was given treatment for seven days at a local hospital with no improvement in symptoms. She was referred to our hospital for additional treatment due to her ongoing fever and bilateral cervical region swelling. Indoor admission consent was obtained from the patient and attendants. On admission to the female medical ward, the patient was noted to be febrile. She also had bilateral cervical lymphadenopathy which ranged from 0.8-1.2 cm in size with no complains of cough or breathlessness. On admission, her heart rate was 128/min, her respiratory rate was 20/min, her blood pressure was 120/70 mmHg, and her temperature was 40.2°C. Investigations performed on admission are mentioned in the following table.

**Table 1-Investigations on Admission**

<b>Laboratory Data</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Reference value</b>
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Haemoglobin	11.7 gm%	13-17 gm%
WBC	<b>11,600 cell/cumm</b>	4000-11000 cell/cumm
Platelet	2.4 lacs/cumm	1.5-4.5 lacs/cumm
ESR	<b>20 mm</b>	<18 mm
Urea	32 mg%	8-52 mg%
Serum Creatinine	0.8 mg%	0.6-1.3 mg%
RBS	74 mg/dL	70-126 mg/dL
HIV/HCV/HBSAG (Rapid tests)	Negative	
Sodium/Potassium	134/4.4 mmol/L	135-145/3.5-5.5 mmol/L
T. Bilirubin	0.6 mg%	0.2-1.0 mg%
CRP	<b>28.4 mg/L</b>	0-6.0 mg/L
SGOT	24 mmol/L	Up to 40 mmol/L
SGPT	24 mmol/L	Up to 40 mmol/L
Albumin	<b>2.6 gm%</b>	3.4-5.4 gm%
EBV mono spot test	Negative	
HIV (ELISA)	Negative	
P.S. For Immature or Atypical cells	Negative	
ENT examination	Normal	
H1N1 RTPCR	Negative	
COVID-19 RTPCR	Negative	
ANA Profile	Negative	
RA factor	Negative	
Anti-CCP Antibodies	Negative	
Urine Routine	Micro Albuminuria absent, Sugar absent, no cast	
Lymph Node Biopsy	Focal Areas of Non-suppurative Necrosis with Histiocytic and Plasmacytoid cell infiltrates	

A pulmonary and ENT (ear, nose and throat) examination was normal. Lab work revealed mild leucocytosis, elevated acute phase reactants and hypoalbuminemia with normal aspartate aminotransferase, alanine

aminotransferase and platelet counts. Peripheral smear came out negative for atypical or immature cells. The serology for HIV, HCV and HbSAg was negative. The EBV mono-spot test and indirect fluorescent antibody test both were negative. Both the COVID-19 and H<sub>1</sub>N<sub>1</sub> RTPCR results were negative. The samples of blood and sputum were sent for sensitivity and culture testing. The patient was given standard symptomatic treatment including antibiotics. Investigational blood was sent, and blood for blood cultures was obtained. A lymph node biopsy was planned on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of admission and after meeting all pre-procedural requirement a lymph node biopsy was performed on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of admission.

The biopsy showed focal areas of non-suppurative necrosis with histiocytic and plasmacytoid cell infiltrates, The lymphnode biopsy was negative for AFB (Acid fast bacilli) stain, atypical cells, immature cells and Gram's stain. Based on biopsy results, negative EBV serology and peripheral smear results a diagnosis of Kikuchi-Fujimoto syndrome was suspected.

She was managed symptomatically with anti-pyretics and NSAIDs for the pain. Fever resolved on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of admission and she was discharged on similar oral treatment. On follow up after 15 days, her fever had resolved with reduction in the size of lymphnodes. On further follow up after 2 months the lymphadenopathy had completely resolved with no other complains.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

Kikuchi-Fujimoto disease (KFD), was first observed in Japan in 1972. Since then, it has been reported in a number of nations. It is widely acknowledged that KFD is a form of lymphoid reactive hyperplasia that causes non-neoplastic lymph node hypertrophy.<sup>[7]</sup> KFD was formerly believed to be more common among women, however current research suggest the condition may affect both sexes.<sup>[9]</sup>

Fever and cervical lymphadenopathy have a wide range of potential differential diagnoses, which frequently results in a thorough workup. Our patient was tested for lymphoma, tuberculosis and adenocarcinoma. The diagnosis was aided by the results of the lymph node biopsy. Necrosis and a histiocytic cellular infiltration can be found in one or more locations within the lymph node, which is the hallmark histology of KFD. There is a chance that the node's capsule will be penetrated, and perinodal inflammation is usual.<sup>[10]</sup>

Even though autoimmune and infectious aetiologies have been put out as potential causes, KFD illness still has no established aetiology. There have been some suggested causal organisms. These include Brucella, Yersinia enterocolitica, Epstein-Barr virus, human T-cell leukaemia virus type 1, human herpesvirus type 6, B19 parvovirus, cytomegalovirus, and parainfluenza virus.<sup>[11]</sup> Case reports include KFD developing concurrently with or after circumstances that may have acted as triggers, such as vaccination and COVID-19 infection.<sup>[12][13][14][15][16][17]</sup>

Unilateral cervical lymphadenopathy, with or without systemic signs and symptoms like fever and skin rash, is the most typical clinical symptom of Kikuchi illness.<sup>[4][18][19][20]</sup> In this case, our patient had bilateral cervical lymphadenopathy and fever.

With a few exceptions, the patterns of lymphadenopathy in TB, KFD, and lymphoma are comparable. In KFD, the lymph nodes are typically unilateral cervical or jugular with a perinodal infiltration and karyorrhetic debris, and their size ranges from 0.5 to 2.5 cm. These

conclusions were made in this instance, favouring KFD more. Both patients may have nodal necrosis, although TB is more likely to have it.<sup>[21][22]</sup>

Almost typically, Kikuchi disease has a benign course and clears up in a few weeks to months. For KFD, there is no proven effective treatment. It's a benign, self-limiting condition that goes away in one to four months. However, patients should be followed up later on because they might develop Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) or in rare cases, relapse with KFD. The latter does not frequently occur again.<sup>[23][24][25]</sup>

KFD is often treated with supportive care. Symptomatic relief is the main goal of treatment, which includes using analgesics and antipyretics to reduce fever and sensitive lymph nodes. For severe cases or recurring illnesses, corticosteroids are only used. It is advised that patients have a comprehensive survey and follow-up to assess any subsequent development of SLE because of the relationship with the disease. For steroid-resistant or recurring cases – hydroxychloroquine is indicated.

Intravenous immunoglobulin is indicated for situations that are resistant to steroids.

Our patient was managed symptomatically with anti-pyretics and NSAIDs for the pain. Fever resolved on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of admission and she was discharged on similar oral treatment. On follow up after 15 days, her fever had resolved with reduction in the size of lymphnodes. On further follow up after 2 months the lymphadenopathy had completely resolved with no other complains.

### **Ethical Approval:**

As per international standard or university standard written ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

## Consent

As per international standard or university standard, patient(s) written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

## Why This Case Report was Important?

It is particularly important to distinguish this disorder from tuberculosis due to the high prevalence of tuberculosis in the Indian population, similarity, and distinct therapies. Other near differential diagnosis include lymphoma and adenocarcinoma.<sup>[1]</sup> To avoid an incorrect diagnosis and the wrong kind of treatment, a doctor needs to be aware of this illness. In our case we present a young adult female of Indian heritage who had Kikuchi-Fujimoto Disease.

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