

Tuberculosis Presenting as Chronic Monoarthritis: A Case Study

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Mycobacterium tuberculosis infection remains a common disease in developing countries with the potential to involve the osteoarticular system. The authors report a case of knee arthritis due to tuberculosis (TB) in a 34-year-old woman. The patient presented with pain and swelling of the right knee as major complaints, without a history of respiratory symptoms. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) demonstrated a marked joint effusion, involving synovial tissue with cartilaginous lesion compatible with pigmented villonodular synovitis (PVNS). After several physiotherapy courses without significant relief, total knee arthroplasty was proposed. Two months after surgery and rehabilitation, symptoms did not completely resolve, with limited active range of motion. Microbial bone biopsy culture at the time of the arthroplasty revealed a TB infection.

Due to the rarity and clinical nonspecificity of TB bone manifestations, early diagnosis may be challenging. Yet, attempted diagnosis and prompt pharmacological intervention are paramount to improve outcomes.