Bone Marrow Metastasis of Malignant Melanoma

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Figure 1. Bone marrow was infiltrated with tumor cells including characteristic melanin pigments (a: aspirate, b: biopsy).

A 67-year-old woman was admitted to our hospital with a 3-month history of lower back pain. One year earlier, the patient was diagnosed with malignant melanoma of the right maxillary bone and underwent an operation followed by adjuvant chemotherapy. A bone marrow aspirate revealed that the marrow was infiltrated by tumors composed of nests of poorly differentiated cells. These tumor cells were large and round shaped, and the cellular outlines within clumps of tumor cells were indistinct. Although these findings were not specific for any group of metastatic tumors, the cytoplasm of tumor cells was filled with numerous granules of melanin (Fig. 1). Thus, a diagnosis of malignant melanoma with bone marrow involvement was made. The primary site of metastatic tumors in bone marrow is difficult to determine by morphological examinations, including immunostaining. However, melanin pigments in cytoplasm are characteristic and definitive findings in malignant melanoma.

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