[PICTURES IN CLINICAL MEDICINE]

Tumor Microembolism to Alveolar Capillaries

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Picture.

A 45-year-old woman presented with persistent dyspnea on exertion. Two months earlier, she had undergone surgical resection for breast cancer. Chest computed tomography showed diffuse ground-glass attenuation (Picture A and B). The interlobular septa and bronchovascular bundles were inconspicuous. A surgical lung biopsy was performed, and an examination of the biopsy specimens showed diffuse thickening of the alveolar walls (Picture C and D). Immunohistochemistry revealed diffuse microemboli with atypical cells occluding CD34-positive pulmonary capillaries (Picture D, inset; arrows). The origin of the tumor cells was immunohisto-

chemically confirmed to be breast cancer. She received chemotherapy and hormonal therapy. The ground-glass attenuation completely disappeared three months after the treatment. Although tumor microembolism to alveolar capillaries is a rare complication of malignancies (1), clinicians should be aware of this form of metastasis in cancer patients. An early diagnosis may allow time for treatment that may improve the outcome.

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