Two Cases of Descending Necrotizing Mediastinitis

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Deep neck infections arising in the cervical interfascial space from odontogenic and pharyngotonsillar origins are infectious diseases which we have commonly encountered in our daily practice. In very rare cases these can lead ultimately to mediastinitis (called descending necrotizing mediastinitis). In such progressive case to mediastinitis the mortality rate is high, currently reported to reach around 40%. We experienced two cases of mediastinitis due to deep neck infection in patients having no underlying systemic diseases (diabetic and others including immunocompromised conditions). Prompt surgical drainage via the cervical and mediastinal approach is essential for the treatment of patients with descending necrotizing mediastinitis and these treatments can determine the prognosis in these patients. We must try to treat these diseases as promptly as we can with surgical drainage. Computed tomography also will help us to decide on an early diagnoses and evaluate abscesses or aerogenic images during the post-operative process.

Keywords: descending necrotizing mediastinitis, deep neck infections, prompt surgical drainage

References

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CT scan of case 1 after enhancement showing an abscess in the deep neck (arrow head) and the upper mediastinum (arrow)

Clinical course of case 1

CT scan of case 2 after enhancement showing an abscess located from the retropharyngeal space to the upper mediastinum