

Clinical Profiles of Pulmonary Cryptococcosis

Takanori AKAGI¹⁾, Ryutaro ARAMAKI¹⁾, Chikara YOSHIMURA¹⁾, Takemasa MATSUMOTO¹⁾,
Taishi HARADA¹⁾, Keiji SOGEN¹⁾, Fumio YAMAMOTO¹⁾, Motokimi SHIRAISHI¹⁾,
Takashige KURAKI¹⁾, Kentaro WATANABE¹⁾, Akinori IWASAKI²⁾, Takayuki SHIRAKUSA²⁾,
Hajime HIRANO³⁾ and Hiroshi IWASAKI⁴⁾

¹⁾ *Department of Respiratory Medicine, Fukuoka University Hospital*

²⁾ *Department of Surgery II, Fukuoka University Hospital*

³⁾ *Department of Nephrology and Rheumatology, Fukuoka University Hospital*

⁴⁾ *Department of Pathology, Faculty of Medicine, Fukuoka University*

Abstract : The clinical profiles were retrospectively examined in ten patients with pulmonary cryptococcosis who had been admitted to the Departments of Respiratory Medicine, Surgery II, and Nephrology and Rheumatology at Fukuoka University Hospital in the past ten years (1995 to 2004). Five patients had such underlying diseases as diabetes mellitus and Wegener's granulomatosis with a possible role in the development of pulmonary cryptococcosis, while the remaining five had no significant underlying diseases. Although a transbronchial lung biopsy (TBLB) revealed granulomatous lesions with cryptococcal yeast in only three of nine patients, the serum cryptococcal antigen was positive in seven of eight patients. Nodular opacities in chest radiograph/CT findings are common, but no characteristic symptoms or laboratory data are associated in patients with pulmonary cryptococcosis, thus suggesting other possible diseases such as lung cancer and pulmonary tuberculosis. Pulmonary cryptococcosis should thus be included in the differential diagnosis when nodular opacities are radiographically recognized. As a result, the serum cryptococcal antigen should be detected in patients who have undergone TBLB without any significant findings before performing a surgical lung biopsy, since it shows an excellent sensitivity and specificity when making a diagnosis of pulmonary cryptococcosis.

Key words : Pulmonary cryptococcosis, Chest CT, Lung cancer, Underlying disease, Anti-fungal drug