ABSTRACT

Objective: To describe the clinical presentation and course of seven ectopic thyroid patients.

Methods:

Design: Retrospective Chart Review
Setting: Tertiary Government Teaching Hospital
Patient: Seven patients

Results: Five patients were female and two were male (ratio of 5:2). Three belonged to the 20 to 30 year-old age group, whereas two were below 10 years of age. All seven were biochemically hypothyroid and ectopic thyroid was found to be the only functioning thyroid tissue. Three patients were managed medically with levothyroxine, while ectopic thyroid was excised in four. Ectopic thyroid tissue was autotransplanted in two cases following excision.

Conclusion: The ages of presentation in the present series correspond with the increased physiological demand of thyroid hormone. Thyroid substitution therapy is a must in the presence of clinical and/or biochemical hypothyroidism. Surgical excision should be avoided as far as possible especially if the ectopic tissue is the only functioning thyroid in the body. Surgery is required in selected cases presenting with obstructive symptoms or hemorrhage which are unresponsive to substitution therapy. Auto transplantation of the ectopic thyroid may not provide significant benefit to the patient and more research is warranted in this aspect.

Keywords: ectopic thyroid, lingual thyroid, thyroid replacement therapy, ectopic thyroid surgery

When thyroid tissue is not in its normal anatomical location, it is called an ectopic thyroid. Ectopic thyroid tissue can be found anywhere between the foramen caecum and the normal position of the thyroid gland, and may be the sole functioning thyroid tissue of the body. It is most frequently found in the region of the foramen caecum in patients where the gland fails to descend. Extralingual thyroid tissue is most commonly located in the anterior cervical area in the region of the thyroglossal duct. We describe the clinical presentation, location, functional status, course and management of seven patients with ectopic thyroid.