



KERATOCYSTIC ODONTOGENIC TUMOR- A REVIEW

Dr. Bhagyasree Nair*	Post Graduate Trainee, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Sree Balaji Dental College and Hospital, Chennai *Corresponding Author
Dr. Vijay Ebeneer	Professor and Head of the Department, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Sree Balaji Dental College and Hospital, Chennai
Dr. B. Saravanakumar	Professor, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Sree Balaji Dental College and Hospital, Chennai

ABSTRACT **Introduction:** Philipsen in 1956 first described a cyst of the jaws lined by keratinizing epithelium. This was known as odontogenic keratocyst. It is now more appropriately named as Keratocystic Odontogenic Tumor(KCOT) because of its tumor like behaviour. This article aims to throw light on the various treatment modalities of KCOT, along with an analysis of their success rates, as well as rates of recurrence, and morbidity. **Materials and Methods:** The goals of treatment should involve eliminating the potential for recurrence while minimizing the surgical morbidity. Enucleation followed by chemical cauterization using Carnoy's solution, followed by excision of overlying attached mucosa has been used for the successful treatment of KCOT. Marsupialization is also considered to be a successful method of treatment of smaller lesions. **Conclusion:** In the light of recent literature, it may be concluded that an aggressive treatment modality like enucleation with application of Carnoy's solution might be considered as the most appropriate treatment modality for the KCOT.

KEYWORDS : Odontogenic Tumor, Keratocystic odontogenic Tumor, Odontogenic Keratocystic Tumor, KCOT, OKC, Benign, Cystic lesion, Tumor behaviour, Resection, Reconstruction

INTRODUCTION

Philipsen in 1956 first described a cyst of the jaws lined by keratinizing epithelium. This was known as odontogenic keratocyst, surgeons have been toiling to find an ideal treatment for it. The various options available for the treatment of the odontogenic keratocyst has been expanding over the past few decades. Despite this, the issue is still debateable in Oral and Maxillofacial surgery. Various treatment modalities have been employed for the successful treatment of the KCOT, from simple enucleation to resection.

KCOT behaves like a tumor in many ways:

1. Involvement of large areas of the bone
2. High recurrence rate
3. Distinctive histopathological features of the lesion
4. Disregulation of the PTCH (patched) gene in both Nevoid basal cell carcinoma syndrome associated and sporadic odontogenic keratocysts

On the other hand, the successful treatment of KCOT by marsupialization essentially denies its tumor-like characteristics. However, cases of carcinoma arising in KCOT have been reported [1,2]. The recurrence of the lesion has even been reported in a bone graft [3]. In this article, we present a review of the various treatment modalities of KCOT.

DISCUSSION

Mikulicz in 1876 first described the KCOT as a condition affecting the jaws. However, the term odontogenic keratocyst was first introduced by Philipsen in 1956. In 1960, Shear [4] stated that, 'in most respects, the diagnosis of primordial cysts is of academic importance only. They are entirely simple in nature and will not recur if enucleated.'

Since then, a wide range of treatment modalities have been put forward for its treatment.

Eyre and Zakrzewska [5] in 1985, stated the following treatment options for the KCOT -**1. Enucleation:**

- with primary closure
- with packing
- with chemical fixation
- with cryosurgery

2. Marsupialization:

- only
- followed by enucleation

3. Resection:

Bramley [6], in 1971, proposed a treatment plan for the keratinising cystic odontogenic tumor due to its tendency to recur. He suggested:

1. Unilocular cysts to be treated by intraoral resection.
2. In areas of difficult access, decompression and secondary enucleation is advocated.
3. Large multilocular cysts should be treated by resection and primary bone graft.

In a systematic review of the treatment and prognosis, Blanas et al. [7] in 2000, have concluded that simple enucleation results in an unnecessarily high recurrence rate when treating the KCOT.

For a routine KCOT in a person who is likely to return for a follow-up treatment, Carnoy's solution seems to be the minimally invasive procedure with the lowest recurrence rate.

If the lesion is very large, decompression of the cyst may be done, which is followed by enucleation. This sequence of procedures also have a low recurrence rate. The use of Carnoy's solution can also be considered at the enucleation stage of the procedure.. If the patient is not likely to return for follow-up, the lesion should be resected.

Bradley and Fischer [8], in 1975, have described a combined enucleation and cryosurgical treatment for KCOT. Webb and Brockbank [9] in 1984, have also presented the treatment of the KCOT of the mandible using a combination of enucleation and cryosurgery. They followed up the case for 5 years and found no recurrence. This suggests that cryosurgery, as an adjunct to enucleation, may prove to be a conservative and reliable method of treatment of KCOT with a low recurrence rate.

The recurrence of the KCOT ranges from 2.5% to 62%. While different studies have shown difference in recurrence rates, the possible mechanisms of recurrence have been described by Voorsmit et al. [11] in 1981. These state that any lining epithelium left behind in the oral cavity may give rise to the formation of a new lesion. Daughter cysts, microcysts or epithelial islands can be found in the walls of the original cysts. New KCOTs may develop from epithelial offshoots of the basal layer of oral epithelium [12]. Both conservative approach and aggressive approach have been advocated for the treatment of the KCOT.

Conservative approach, however, has not gained much popularity. This is due to the difficulty in the complete removal of the KCOT, due to its thin friable lining, the limited surgical access, skill and experience of the surgeon. Most importantly, the desire to preserve adjacent vital structures renders the conservative approach as not very popular.

The goals of treatment should involve eliminating the potential for recurrence while minimizing the surgical morbidity. Enucleation followed by chemical cauterization using Carnoy's solution, followed by excision of overlying attached mucosa has been used for the successful treatment of KCOT. Stoeltinga [16] in 2001 concluded in a long term follow up study that this method gave rise to a fairly low number of recurrences. Peripheral ostectomy combined with chemical cauterization using Carnoy's solution may give nil recurrence rate [15].

A strict follow up protocol, which allows for early surgical intervention in case of recurrence, limits the extent of second surgery, therefore, giving rise to less morbidity. It seems very likely that offshoots of the basal layer of the epithelium of the oral mucosa are a major cause for the development of some KCOT and some recurrences.

Resection of the lesion is said to give the least recurrence rate out of all treatment modalities. Bataineh and Al Qudah [17] in 1998 advocated for resection without continuity defects as a radical treatment. In this, removal of the cyst, teeth and the overlying soft tissue was followed by packing of the resulting cavity in order to minimize the risk of recurrence.

Nakamura et al. [18] in 2002 have stated that marsupialization, as well as decompression, have the purpose of relieving the pressure within the cystic cavity. This promotes lower recurrence by allowing the growth of new bone that fills the defect. As a result, it saves the structures like tooth roots, maxillary sinus or the inferior alveolar canal. They can be saved from surgical damage by these treatment modalities.

They concluded in their study that marsupialization was a highly successful procedure that helped to reduce the size of the KCOT before surgery. It was found to be more effective in the mandibular body region than in the ramus region. It also did not adversely affect the recurrence tendency of KCOT.

Some authors have advocated marsupialization as a viable treatment for the KCOT [19,20]. Pogrel and Jordan [20,21] in 2004, treated 10 cases of KCOT by marsupialization. They found that all the 10 cases of KCOT resolved completely solely with this form of treatment. Their study also suggested that the cyst lining may get replaced by normal epithelium during this treatment.

According to Stoeltinga [16,22], complete elimination of recurrences is probably not possible. This is because of two reasons.:

1. Some cysts are still treated like ordinary odontogenic cysts. This is because a preoperative diagnosis was not made and the cysts were not treated according to the suggested protocol.
2. Despite excision of the overlying mucosa, there may still be epithelial islands or even microcysts left behind in the mucosa. These may develop into a new KCOT.

Chye CH and Singh B [25] described a case of a large KCOT that had developed rapidly and aggressively over a short period of 2 years and presented with acute symptoms. The KCOT was enucleated and the residual cavity was treated with Carnoy's solution. Kumar M, Bandtopadhyay and Thapliyal GK [26] have reported a case of a KCOT occurring in the anterior mandible which an uncommon site, with the lesion crossing the midline being a unique occurrence.

Radical excision has no recurrence but does have the highest morbidity rate and should be reserved for multiple recurrent cysts after conservative means.

Tolstunov and Treasure [28] have advocated for a surgical treatment algorithm for KCOT. They reported a combined treatment of KCOT and mandibular defect with marsupialization, enucleation, iliac crest bone graft, and dental implants. Meara et al. [29] have found out an overall recurrence rate of 35%, and the average time to recurrence of 4 years in their clinicopathologic review.

Simple enucleation (without curettage) is no longer advocated as an appropriate method for the treatment KCOT. Recurrence rates are highest with this method of treatment and range from 9% to 62.5% [30,31]. Scharfetter et al. [32] in their study on KCOT proliferation, have suggested that a minimum 5-mm bony margin is adequate to ensure satellite cyst removal.

CONCLUSION

Although literature contains many reports regarding management of KCOT, there still is debate as to the most effective treatment for this lesion. Depending on size, location, and behavior, the clinician should decide on an incisional versus excisional biopsy. Prior aspiration cytology may be helpful. In patients with multiple KCOTs, evaluation for the presence of basal cell nevus syndrome should be taken into consideration. Larger KCOTs, with possible cortical perforation, deserve radiographic assessment such as CT in addition to plain films.

Treatment of the KCOT varies from enucleation and curettage to osseous resection. Various factors that should be considered in the selection of the appropriate treatment include size and extent, location, presence of perforation or soft tissue involvement, age of individual, and primary or recurrent nature of lesion.

Long-term follow-up is suggested because KCOTs have been known to have late recurrences. Recent factors support emerging molecular evidence that the KCOT is more likely to be a benign cystic neoplasm than a simple odontogenic cyst.

This article aims to bring out the importance of clinical awareness about KCOT. It also aims to emphasize the importance of a careful histological examination and the necessity of obtaining biopsy materials from various areas to prevent a misdiagnosis. In the light of recent literature, it may be concluded that an aggressive treatment modality like enucleation with application of Carnoy's solution might be considered as the most appropriate treatment modality for the KCOT.

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