

Investigation Corner

Paget's disease of bone is hidden in Indian Diaspora.

A patient of mine of Indian origin in late 50s, following regular annual bloods for Hypertension, was referred to Bone metabolism clinic in University Teaching Hospital for Isolated persistent elevation of Alkaline phosphatase with otherwise normal LFTs, Calcium profiles, normal urinary calcium excretion, normal PSA and normal DEXA (Bone mineral density)His very low 25 Hydroxy Vitamin D was treated with Calcium and Vitamin D supplements for several months, which only reduced the Alkaline phosphatase but did not normalize it. He had various bone X rays and a Bone scan which on joint consultation with several radiologists and bone metabolism physician, it was concluded that features were strongly suggestive of Paget's disease of bone. Investigations revealed involvement of scapula (unusual) right femur and left iliac bone. He has been advised long term treatment with Calcium and Vitamin D and regular annual alkaline phosphatase measurement. On long term (over several years) follow up his LFT's, PSAs, Calcium profiles, Vitamin D levels have stayed consistently normal and he remained healthy. On regular exercise his alkaline phosphatase lowered but still raised above normal values. He warranted and received no specific treatment for Paget's disease of bone. Sometimes if alkaline phosphatase is massively raised, medical management only helps to lower alkaline phosphatase. During my medical career I also experienced similar situation with another patient of Indian origin. It appears that Paget's disease of bone is common in Indian diaspora and we need to seek out for it in situations of isolated elevation of Alkaline phosphatase with normal LFTs, Calcium profile, PSA and BMD.

*Dr. M. Viswesvaraiah,
UK*