

## **The Rare often Violet Sarcoma: A Case of Kaposi Sarcoma in HIV/AIDS**

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Kaposi sarcoma (KS) is a rare malignancy derived from the cells that line lymph and blood vessels. KS is caused by the human herpes virus-8 (HHV-8) and is an AIDS defining illness that manifests as violaceous skin and mucosal lesions.

The patient is a 37-year-old previously healthy male who presented with a 4-month history of rapid, unintentional weight loss totaling 60lbs. The patient reported having a low WBC count at a free health fair 1 year prior but was uninsured, without access to follow up care. Additionally, he noted the appearance of several dark purple, raised lesions on his skin about 9 months prior. Initial workup in the ED revealed elevated monocytes, and a dangerously low WBC count of  $1.4$  (ref  $4.5-11 \times 10^9$ ). He was found to be HIV+ with a CD4 T cell count of 2 (ref:359-1519) The patient was subsequently hospitalized where his labs continued to downtrend. Neutropenic precautions were placed to limit contact and while treatment was initiated. A biopsy of the skin lesions later revealed a diagnosis of Kaposi sarcoma.

South Texas is home to the nation's largest uninsured population of which over 30% live below the federal poverty level. Texas also ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the country for new diagnoses of HIV. These social circumstances pose significant barriers to health care, resulting in an increasing rate of late-stage HIV/AIDS diagnoses/deaths. While there is no vaccine against the HHV-8, proper education and increased testing would ultimately carry the largest impact in the reduction of Kaposi sarcoma cases.

### References:

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