

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Thoracic air leak syndrome as the sole manifestation of chronic lung graft-versus-host disease: a case report

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I read with great interest the article published in the journal by Nair et al., titled *Thoracic air leak syndrome as the sole manifestation of chronic lung graft-versus-host disease: a case report* [1]. The case report was an elaborate narrative of the management of respiratory symptoms and syndromes encountered in a post-stem cell transplant recipient spanning more than 200 days. I would like to offer the following comment about the case report.

- a. The authors have mentioned that there was no clinical, physiological, and radiological evidence of lung graft-versus-host disease (GVHD). But the patient's pulmonary function test showed obstructive ventilatory defect which leads to considering bronchiolitis obliterans syndrome (BOS) in the patient. Beschorner et al. first described the syndrome manifesting as a new onset airflow obstruction following hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT) [2]. Here, in this patient, it would be of significant importance to know the baseline pulmonary function test pre-HSCT.
- b. The index patient has no lung parenchymal changes in the illustrated computed tomography images, but expiratory imaging was not done. The expiratory scan is more sensitive for diagnosing air trapping which is a consistent finding in BOS, and also, bron-

chiolitis obliterans has been mentioned as one of the indications of doing expiratory imaging when there is a normal inspiratory imaging [3].

- c. The National Institute of Health (NIH) criteria for the diagnosis of BOS, in a patient already having GVHD manifestation in other organs, take into account only pulmonary function test (PFT) parameters and absence of infections [4]. Knowing the details of the index patient's PFT like forced expiratory volume in 1 s (FEV1), FEV1-to-vital capacity ratio, and lung volumes would be essential before ruling out the possibility of BOS. Radiological evidence of air trapping is no longer an essential criterion in the updated diagnostic criteria, as this may be absent in the early phase of the disease [5].

Abbreviations

GVHD	Graft-versus-host disease
BOS	Bronchiolitis obliterans syndrome
HSCT	Hematopoietic stem cell transplantation
NIH	National Institute of Health
PFT	Pulmonary function test
FEV1	Forced expiratory volume in 1 s

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Competing interests

Nil.

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