Reviewer's report

Title: Portal hypertension as the initial manifestation of POEMS syndrome: a case report

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Reviewer: Roger Pearse

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Wu et al present a case report of POEMS with portal hypertension. Portal hypertension appears to be a rare complication of POEMS and/or multicentric Castleman's disease, and has been described in several case reports published previously. This would be the first to demonstrate reversal of portal hypertension following successful treatment of POEMS, and would therefore strengthen a potential causal association.

The authors do a good job of explaining how the current presentation differs from the hepatomegaly and ascites typically found in patients with POEMS. They also discuss potential ways in which POEMS may trigger portal fibrosis, observed in this and in the earlier reports. IL1beta, IL6, IL12 and TNF are mentioned, but as these were not measured, this manuscript does not further our understanding of the relevant pathophysiology. The authors might also mention the intriguing question of why portal fibrosis is a rare complication of POEMS, when fibrosis is a common manifestation in other organs such as skin.

Overall, the manuscript should be shortened. The discussion should focus on the unique aspects of the case, and not discuss the potential therapeutic benefits of autologous stem cell transplant, when this is not relevant to the current case, or list the diagnostic criteria for POEMS, or describe Castleman's disease. The manuscript is in need of extensive editing. Words are inappropriately used (e.g. "fortuitous" and "effectiveness"), and the text is too verbose. For example, "On physical examination, cachexia was noted with hyperpigmentation. Abdominal bulge and moderate edema were obvious. Distension of jugular vein was noticed. Lymph nodes in the right axillary and splenomegaly were palpable." could be shortened to: "Physical exam was notable for cachexia, hyperpigmentation, moderate ascites, jugular venous distention, right axillary lymphadenopathy and splenomegaly." Figures 1, 2 and 3 should be removed, as they add little to the case.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.
Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.
Yes

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