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Case Report

Pulmonary tuberculosis and COVID-19 coinfection: Hickam's Dictum revisited

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 and pulmonary tuberculosis (PTB) coinfection is associated with increased mortality and presents a unique diagnostic challenge to the clinician. We describe three cases of newly diagnosed PTB in COVID-19 patients treated at our centre and their clinical and radiological features. The challenges associated with diagnosis and management are also explored. Patient 1 was a case of smear positive, endobronchial tuberculosis incidentally diagnosed due to CT changes, and eventually made good recovery. Patient 2 was a case of COVID-19 who succumbed but was diagnosed posthumously due to a positive sputum culture for tuberculosis. Patient 3 showed radiographic features of PTB and was treated empirically for TB. In conclusion, COVID-19 and PTB coinfection should be suspected in the presence of constitutional symptoms, prior immunocompromised states, prolonged respiratory symptoms or fever, or unresolved radiological abnormalities, more so in regions where TB is endemic.

List of abbreviations

TB	tuberculosis
PTB	pulmonary tuberculosis
CT	computed tomography
WHO	World Health Organization
NPOP	nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal
CTPA	computed tomography pulmonary angiogram
HRCT	high resolution computed tomography
GGO	ground glass opacities
ATT	anti-tuberculous therapy
IGRA	interferon-gamma release assay

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