

## Case study

### Case study on Langerhans cell histiocytosis of bone

#### ABSTRACT:

**Aims:** To precise, the epidemiological, clinical, para-clinical, therapeutic and prognostic characteristics of skeletal involvement in Langerhans cell histiocytosis.

**Materials and methods:** A retrospective and descriptive study of patients with Langerhans cell histiocytosis admitted in Internal Medicine Departments of Hedi Chaker University Hospital of Sfax between 1996 and 2018. Cases of Langerhans cell histiocytosis confirmed with histo- pathological examination were included.

**Results:** Four cases of LCH with bone involvement were noted. All patients enrolled were male and the mean age at diagnosis was 23.25 years. The bone lesions were unifocal in two cases and multifocal with multisystemic LCH in the others. The treatment consisted of curettage in two cases and two patients received systemic therapy with corticosteroids and vinblastine respectively. The outcome was favorable in two patients with eosinophilic granuloma and systemic replaces were noted with novel bone lesions in two patients presenting the systemic form of the disease.

**Conclusion:** LCH is a rare disease in children and young adult males. In the present series, bone was the most frequently involved site. The circumstances of discovery of bone localization were the pain swelling lesion in different sites. Biopsy is necessary to obtain diagnosis confirmation. The prognosis of this pathology depends largely on early diagnosis, on other organs affected and the response to treatment. The new class of BRAF inhibitors may be a promising therapeutic option in LCH which needs to be assessed in prospective studies mainly in bone lesions.

**Key-words:** Langerhans cell histiocytosis, bone involvement, adult.

#### 1.INTRODUCTION:

Langerhans cell histiocytosis (LCH) represents a spectrum of Disorders that share in common a tissue infiltration by dendritic Langerhans cells organized in granulomas. The Langerhans nature is confirmed in immuno- histochemistry by expressing CD1a or langerin / CD207 and in electron microscopy by the presence of Birbeck granules [1, 2]. Although several etiopathogenic hypotheses have been advanced (infectious, immunological, genetic or neoplastic), the etiology remains unknown [3,4,5]. LCH can occur at any age, but it affects preferentially the child and the young adult [1]. It covers a series of entities with a widely varied clinical presentation and prognosis from single organ to

Comment [VS1]: para-clinical

Comment [VS2]: Space ????

Comment [VS3]: eosinophilic

Comment [VS4]: granuloma

Comment [VS5]: Future suggestion ?

36 multisystem involvement. Any organ or system of the human body can be involved. Bone is the most  
37 frequent site noted in about 80% of cases, nonetheless few studies have been conducted (LCH) to  
38 precise its characteristics [6]. The aim of the present study is to precise the epidemiological, clinical,  
39 para-clinical, therapeutic and prognostic characteristics of skeletal involvement in Langerhans cell  
40 histiocytosis.

Comment [VS6]: para-clinical,

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## 42 2. MATERAILS AND METHODS:

43 A retrospective study of patients with Langerhans cell histiocytosis admitted in Internal Medicine  
44 Departments of Hedi Chaker University Hospital of Sfax between 1996 and 2018. Cases of  
45 Langerhans cell histiocytosis confirmed with histo-pathological examination were included.

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## 47 3. RESULTS:

### 48 Case 1:

Comment [VS7]: Bold ??

49 A 22-year-old patient was admitted in January 2005 to internal medicine department for disseminated  
50 LCH. At the age of 14 years the patient presented a diffuse alveolysis with general bone pain. The  
51 patient was referred first to the maxillofacial and Orthodontics department. To explore  
52 these unexplained symptoms, a skeletal scintigraphy showed diffuse hyper fixation at the base and  
53 the cranial vault, the jaws, the upper extremity of the left femur, the diaphysis and the left femoral  
54 condyle, the left iliac wing, the lower extremity of the left tibia and the head of the right fibula. The body  
55 scan revealed multiple lytic and blowers lesions affecting the whole skeleton. In the skull, these lesions  
56 interested the frontal, temporal and mastoid bone, the sphenoid bone, the occipital bone, the two  
57 rocks complicated with otitis media, the left malar bone and the mandible. The bone involvement  
58 concerned also the spine and costal arcs. The lesions affected even the left iliac bone and the  
59 acetabular region (figure n°1). In upper limbs, there were bilateral lesions in carpal bones. In the lower  
60 limbs, the bone lesions were extended in the left femur and in tarsal bones. The thoracic and  
61 abdominal tomography showed a multiple micro-nodular, reticular, cystic lung lesions and  
62 homogeneous hepato-splenomegaly. The association of diffuse osteolytic lesions, lung and liver  
63 involvements evoked the diagnosis of systemic LCH confirmed by the presence of increased numbers  
64 of Langerhans' cells in the bronchoalveolar-lavage fluid and identified by staining with antibodies  
65 against CD1a. The patient was treated with 8 weekly pulses of vinblastine (5 mg / m<sup>2</sup>) with a favorable  
66 outcome particularly of bone lesions at the control scintigraphy. Three years later, the patient  
67 presented with a mandibular pain. The dental panoramic showed multi-compartmental extended  
68 osteolytic lesions affecting the hemi mandible, especially on the right (figure n°2). Maxillofacial CT  
69 scan revealed aggressive lytic lesions affecting the mandibular branches. The thoraco-abdominal CT  
70 showed the extension of nodular and cystic pulmonary lesions. The patient was treated with 6 weekly  
71 pulses of vinblastine (5mg/m<sup>2</sup>), steroids at high doses and methotrexate 15 mg per week with good

Comment [VS8]: Skeletal scintigraphy

Comment [VS9]: Hyper fixation

Comment [VS10]: mastoid bone

Comment [VS11]: micro-nodular,

Comment [VS12]: particularly

72 clinical therapeutic response. The combination of methotrexate and steroid was interrupted after 3  
73 years of sustained remission.

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76 **Case 2:**

Comment [VS13]: Bold ??

77 A 21-year-old patient was admitted in September 2011 to otolaryngology department with a history of  
78 lower right maxillary pain since 4 months. A facial CT tomography revealed a right maxillary lytic lesion  
79 extending to the floor of the ipsilateral orbit associated with a lamellar periosteal reaction without  
80 reaction infiltration of the adjacent tissues. The surgical exploration confirmed the presence of a tumor  
81 process in the right sinus. Histopathological examination of the biopsied tumor showed a cluster of  
82 histiocytic cells with a polymorphic infiltrate particularly rich in eosinophilic poly-nuclear cells and rare  
83 giant multinucleated cells without associated necrosis. In immunohistochemistry, histiocytic cells were  
84 labeled by anti-CD1a, anti-PS100 and anti-CD68 antibodies. Then the patient was referred to internal  
85 medicine department. The physical examination was normal. The sinus radiograph revealed an  
86 osteolytic lesion next to the right maxillary sinus (figure n°3). All other investigations including  
87 complete blood count, chemistries, liver function, skeletal scintigraphy and the thoracic tomography  
88 were within normal. The diagnosis of eosinophilic bone granuloma in right maxillary was retained. The  
89 treatment consisted of curettage of the lesion already done at the same time of the diagnostic biopsy.

Comment [VS14]: September

Comment [VS15]: poly-nuclear

Comment [VS16]: referred

90 **Case 3:**

Comment [VS17]: Bold ??

91 A 38-year-old patient was admitted in 2004 in endocrinology department with progressive polydipsia  
92 with concomitant polyuria and nocturia. Diagnosis of diabetes insipidus was established after a water  
93 deprivation test. Cerebral MRI showed maxillomandibular multifocal osteolytic lesions, thickening of  
94 the pituitary stalk and disappearance of the T1 post- pituitary hyper signal. Histopathological  
95 examination of the bone lesion revealed a granulomatous infiltrate rich in histiocytes and eosinophilic  
96 poly nuclear cells with positive immunostaining of the CD1a +, PS100 + and CD68 + type. The  
97 diagnosis of LCH was made. The patient received high-dose corticosteroid therapy with substitutive  
98 treatment with DDAVP. Three years later, the patient experienced bilateral mixed deafness related to  
99 bilateral bone lysis of the petrous apex confirmed with the rock tomography. Then, the patient was  
100 referred to the internal medicine department. The thoracic tomography showed a diffuse micro-cystic  
101 lesion of the lung. The patient was treated with 8 courses of vinblastine combined with high dose  
102 corticosteroid therapy. Three years following treatment, the disease was considered in remission with  
103 persistent irreversible bilateral deafness and sequellar lung lesions.

104 **Case 4:**

Comment [VS18]: Bold ????

105 A 12-year-old patient was referred to neurosurgery departement in January 2013 with a one month  
106 history of pain and swelling of the tempal area. The brain tomography showed a left temporal  
107 osteolytic lesion (figure n°4). Cerebral MRI concluded with a left fronto-temporal lytic lesion. The

Comment [VS19]: departement

108 anatomopathological examination of biopsied lesion revealed a polymorphic granulation tissue  
 109 consisting of atypical nucleus histiocytes, multinucleate giant cells like osteoclastic type, numerous  
 110 foam cells associated with lymphocytes and plasma cells with some poly-nuclear cells. In  
 111 immunohistochemistry, the cells were strongly positive for CD68 and PS100, and they were irregularly  
 112 positive for CD1a. The patient was addressed to internal medicine department. Physical examination,  
 113 biological and radiological assessments were normal. The diagnosis of eosinophilic bone granuloma in  
 114 the temporal bone was retained. Five years post-surgery, there are no signs of recurrence of the  
 115 lesion.

Comment [VS20]: poly nuclear

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117 **Table1: Clinical characteristics, treatment and outcome of our patients**

Comment [VS21]: Bold

Patient N°	Location of bone lesion	Systemic involvements	Type of disease	Treatment and outcome
1	-The skull: the frontal, temporal, mastoidian, sphenoid and occipital bone, the two rocks, the left malar bone and the mandible. -The spine and costal arcs. -The left iliac bone and the acetabular region. -The left femur. -The tarsal and carpal bones.	Lung, spleen and liver involvements.	Systemic LCH with risk organs involvement.	<b>Initial treatment:</b> 8 weekly pulses of vinblastine with a favorable outcome. <b>Treatment of systemic relapse after three years:</b> The vinblastine in combination of steroids and méthotrexate with good therapeutic response
2	-The right maxillary bone	-	Eosinophilic bone granuloma	The treatment consisted of curettage of the lesion with no relapses
3	-The maxillomandibular bone -The bilateral petrous apex	Bone, lung and post-pituitary endocrine involvements	Systemic LCH	<b>Initial treatment:</b> high-dose corticosteroid therapy with substitutive treatment with DDAVP <b>Treatment of systemic relapse after three years:</b> Vinblastine combined with high dose of corticosteroid therapy with persistent irreversible bilateral deafness and sequellar lung lesions.
4	-The left fronto-temporal bone.	-	Eosinophilic bone	The treatment consisted of surgical excision of the

Comment [VS22]: Bold

			granuloma	lesion with favourable outcome
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119 **3. DISCUSSION:**

120 Bone is the most frequent involvement in LCH noted in about 80% of cases and represents  
121 approximately 50% of the localizations in the adult [6, 7]. There is a predilection of location for the flat  
122 bone (skull, ribs, sternum, iliac bones and scapula), the vertebrae and also the long bones (femur,  
123 humerus and tibia). The small bones of the hands or feet are rarely affected [8,9 ,10]. Bone lesions  
124 may be asymptomatic and revealed in radiological findings or cause localized painful swelling of the  
125 soft tissues or pathological fracture [11]. Some bone lesions can be discovered during complications  
126 [12]. In the cranial vault, the lesion is manifested by the appearance of soft swelling as reported in our  
127 fourth case report [13].The involvement of the temporal bone can be manifested by otorrhea,  
128 hypoacusis or repeated otitis and even a sequential deafness [14]. These clinical symptoms were  
129 observed in our third patient. The maxillary and mandibular localization is frequent and its symptoms  
130 are nonspecific as in 3 of our patients and the most common clinical signs are intraoral mass, pain,  
131 gingivitis, dental exfoliation and mucous ulceration [ 15]. Spinal involvement accounts for 15 to 30%  
132 of localizations in systemic LCH and about 10 to 15% in eosinophilic granulomas [16]. The level of  
133 vertebral involvement varies with age. In adults, 47% of reported cases involve the cervical spine,  
134 33% the thoracic spine, and 20% the lumbar spine [17]. Some authors emphasize the exceptional  
135 nature of neurological disorders [18]. The iliac bone is most often reached with a very evocative  
136 localization to the cookie cutter [19]. The involvement of the peripheral skeleton is rare and classically  
137 localized in the long bones (femur, humerus). **In the present** series, vertebral and iliac bone  
138 involvement was detected in our first patient with no neurological disorders. On standard radiography,  
139 single or multiple bone lesions are typically lytic known as "geography maps" or "punch" with or  
140 without peripheral sclerosis. In the skull, the typical appearance of a LCH lesion is a well-defined lytic  
141 lesion, with **non -sclerotic margins**, involving both inner and outer table, resulting in a double-contour  
142 appearance, sometimes associated with an adjacent soft tissue mass [13]. In the long bones, the  
143 lesions are essentially diaphyseal producing images of oval osteolysis with periosteal and often  
144 lamellar, appositions [12, 20]. In all cases of the base of the skull and the facial mass, computed  
145 tomography (**CT**) allows to better analyze the osteolysis, and especially the invasion of the soft parts  
146 [21]. In the spine, the involvement predominates in the vertebral body. The typical aspect corresponds  
147 to the vertebra plana described by Calvé in 1924 [22]. The MRI is the most effective examination to  
148 analyze the expansion of the tumor in the marrow and the nerve roots and to check the integrity of the  
149 intervertebral disc [12, 20]. **Skeletal** scintigraphy allows evaluation of bone lesion extension and follow-  
150 up of lesions after treatment. **The present** series is particular by the richness of the radiological signs.  
151 A bone biopsy is crucial to confirm LCH and it was performed in all our patients allowing the diagnosis  
152 of LCH in 3 cases [18]. Therapeutic strategy of skeletal involvement in Langerhans cell histiocytosis  
153 depends on clinical form. The unifocal bone lesion responds well to local therapy such as curettage,  
154 excision or possibly intra-tumoral steroid injections [8]. Persistence symptoms of disease, or  
155 expansion of the lesion after surgical intervention, may respond to the subsequent radiotherapy [23].

Comment [VS23]: present

Comment [VS24]: non -sclerotic

Comment [VS25]: (CT)

156 The use of bisphosphonates in monthly treatment has been successfully reported in some patients  
157 [24,25,26,27].In **the present** series, complete excision of the bone lesion (curettage) was effective in  
158 two cases. In the multifocal bone lesions or associated with multisystem lesions of LCH, the systemic  
159 reference treatment is based on the combination of vinblastine and corticosteroids. In a retrospective  
160 **multicenter** study, vinblastine was shown to have good response in adults as a first line treatment;  
161 however, many patients experienced reactivation in long-term follow-up [28]. The first-line systemic  
162 treatment of our patients was based on high-dose corticosteroid therapy which was proposed in  
163 multifocal LCH bone with post-pituitary involvement in the third case. Eight courses of vinblastine were  
164 indicated in disseminated LCH with pulmonary and liver involvement in the first case. In both cases  
165 relapses were noted affecting the maxillofacial bone, the lung and the liver in the first case and the  
166 auricular bone as well as the lung in the second case. Induction therapy with vinblastine has been  
167 indicated in combination with corticosteroid therapy in two cases. Methotrexate was also introduced in  
168 the case with organ risk involvement.

169 LCH is also a source of late sequelae. Prevalence of sequelae is as follow: orthopaedic related 27%,  
170 diabetes insipidus 19%, growth retardation 13%, cosmetic 10%, neurological 7%, hearing 7%, anterior  
171 pituitary hormone deficiency 7%, hepatobiliary 4% and ophthalmological 3% [29]. Orthopedic sequelae  
172 are common in plurifocal form: vertebra plana, kyphoscolioses **and bone** deformities ranging from  
173 aesthetic impact to functional disorders, tooth loss, dental articular disorder [30]. In the **present** series,  
174 the subsequent evolution was favorable in 3 cases. LCH was responsible for mixed bilateral sequelal  
175 deafness and diabetes insipidus in one case.

176 In **this**, study **researchers** tried to highlight clinical **para-clinical** and therapeutic features of bone  
177 involvements in LCH that is characterized by its recurrence and multifocal localizations in  
178 disseminated form of the disease. However, its main limitations are the small size of our population  
179 and it is also a retrospective study. Vemurafenib, a BRAF inhibitor was effective in an open-  
180 label, non- randomized study in cases of LCH with BRAF- V600E mutation. Dabrafenib is  
181 another BRAF inhibitor that was efficacious in refractory cases of LCH with more safety.  
182 This new therapeutic option stills not well documented (31, 32,33, 34). **Therefore, further**  
183 **experiences need to be gained especially in the treatment with prospective trials targeting the genetic**  
184 **pathogenesis pathways which are the mutation of BRAF-V600E and MAPK genes** [35, 36, 37, 38, 39,  
185 40, 41].

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#### 189 4. CONCLUSION

190 **LCH** is a rare disease in children and young adult males. Bone is the most frequently involved site.  
191 The circumstances of discovery of bone localization were the pain swelling lesion in different sites. It  
192 is characterized by lytic lesions of variable aggression. CT and/or MRI may complement radiography.  
193 Biopsy is necessary to obtain diagnosis confirmation. The prognosis of this pathology depends largely  
194 on early diagnosis, other organs affected and the response to treatment.

Comment [VS26]: and bone

Comment [VS27]: present

Comment [VS28]: para-clinical

Comment [VS29]: ,

Comment [VS30]: What is the meaning ?

195 **LISTS OF FIGURES:**

196 **Figure n°1:** vertebral and iliac bone Langerhans cell Histiocytosis

197 **Figure n°2:** osteolytic lesions of Langerhans cell Histiocytosis affecting the hemi mandible and the  
198 scalp

199 **Figure n°3:** osteolytic lesion of Langerhans cell Histiocytosis next to the right maxillary sinus.

200 **Figure n°4:** temporal osteolytic lesion of Langerhans cell Histiocytosis on the brain tomography

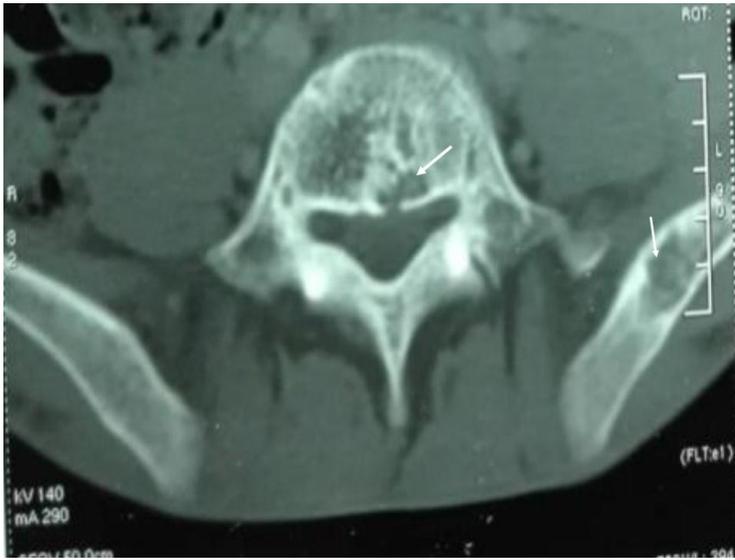
201 **COMPETING INTEREST:** Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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**Figure n°1 : vertebral and iliac bone Langerhans cell  
Histiocytosis**



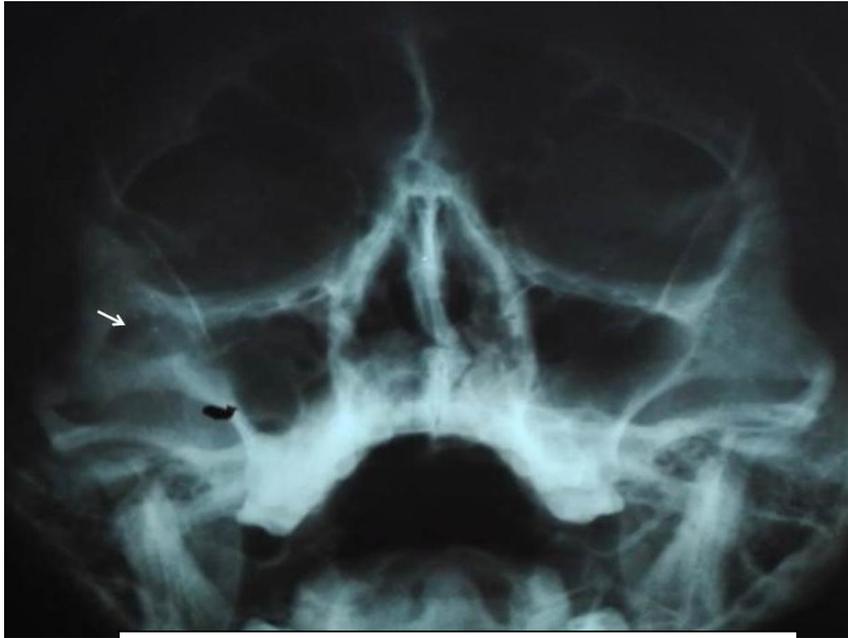
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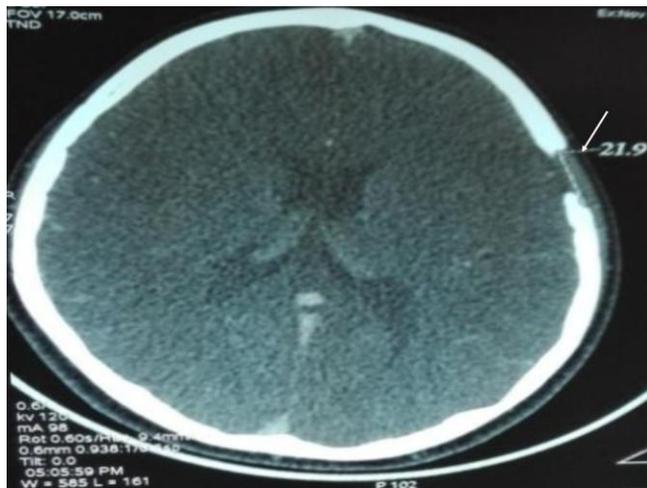
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**Figure n°2: osteolytic lesions of Langerhans cell  
Histiocytosis affecting the hemi mandible and the**



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**Figure n°3: osteolytic lesion of Langerhans cell Histiocytosis next to the right maxillary sinus.**



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**Figure n°4: temporal osteolytic lesion of Langerhans cell Histiocytosis on the brain tomography**