TWO PRIMARY MALIGNANT NEOPLASMS IN ONE PATIENT*

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THE occurrence of two primary malignant neoplasms in one patient is not a rarity, but it is uncommon and especially in a patient aged less than 50 years.

Case Report

A man aged 47 years attended the Out-patient Department of Moorfields Eye Hospital on May 2, 1959, complaining of a swelling on the right eye which had been noticed 6 days previously. He stated that he had not had any previous abnormality of the eye, although it had shown a tendency for many years to be bloodshot. His general health was stated to be satisfactory.

Examination.—The left eye was normal and a round swelling was found in the limbal region of the right eye situated at about 8 o'clock. It was about 5 mm. in diameter, solid, and showed slight pigmentation. The patient was admitted to hospital and was seen by various members of the consultant staff who agreed that the swelling was neoplastic and that it should be excised. On May 9, 1959, the tumour was removed in an 8-mm. disc of sclera and cornea 0.4 mm. thick; an 8-mm. disc of donor cornea 0.4 mm. thick was placed then in the position of the disc which had been removed and fixed in position with direct sutures. The eye settled satisfactorily and the patient was discharged on May 27, 1959.

The pathological report indicated that the tumour was a malignant melanoma of the limbus and that it had not been completely removed. The patient was therefore referred to Dr. M. Lederman of the Royal Marsden Hospital Radiotherapy Department, who gave a course of irradiation. The condition of the eye remained satisfactory, but in June, 1960, his general condition deteriorated. He developed abdominal pain and was admitted to the Royal Marsden Hospital on June 30, 1960. Laparotomy revealed extensive deposits of spheroidal carcinoma in the liver and in the pancreas, and the patient died soon after this operation. At *post mortem* a hitherto undetected primary carcinoma of the lung was found. His death was not, therefore, associated in any way with the malignant melanoma of the limbus of the right eye.

Discussion

This case demonstrates that the treatment of the malignant melanoma had been satisfactory, as far as could be indicated in this very brief follow-up. It had been expected that laparotomy would reveal metastases of the malignant melanoma and it was a considerable surprise to find that a second primary neoplasm was present in the lung.

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