RE:

Osteosarcoma of the rib: a rare presentation

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We appreciate the comments of the authors regarding the immune status of our patient and particularly whether there was an infection with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in our case of osteosarcoma of the rib that was recently published (1).

Osteosarcoma is the most common bone tumor of childhood and adolescence; however, the rib is a rare primary site (1). We reported two female patients with osteosarcoma of the rib, both of whom were seronegative for HIV and did not present any immunodeficiency (1, 2). Moreover, in studies that we conducted in different time cohorts within the last two decades, all of the children with cancer were seronegative for HIV both at diagnosis and at the end of treatment (3). Although we have previously shown that there were some cellular immunosuppression at diagnosis in bone and soft tissue sarcomas, none were related to HIV (4). In our cohort of 189 children and adolescents with osteosarcoma, none were seropositive for HIV.

Although the incidence of cancer is elevated in patients with AIDS, the most common malignancies reported are Kaposi's sarcomas, non-Hodgkin lymphomas, some virus-related cancers (cervix, liver, anus, vulva, vagina, penis and oropharynx) and some virus-unrelated cancers (lung, lip, larynx or nasal cavity) (5). In the largest population-based study, which evaluated cancer incidence in 448,258 patients with HIV, no excess risk for bone cancer was reported (5).

Regarding the incidence of HIV-positive patients in Turkey, according to the report of the Turkish Ministry of Health on December 2016, there were 14,695 patients reported between 1985-2016 with the diagnosis of HIV/AIDS, and only 3.1% were younger than 19 years of age (6). In a retrospective analysis, 22 children with HIV were reported by Istanbul University over 14 years,

seven of whom were foreign, and it was reported that HIV in children was rare in Turkey (7).

In conclusion, HIV seropositivity is rare in children in Turkey and the present data in the literature do not suggest an association of bone tumors and HIV.

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