

Case Report

Spontaneous Pituitary Adenomas in Squirrel Monkeys (*Saimiri sciureus*)

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On postmortem examination, 2 geriatric captive male squirrel monkeys (*Saimiri sciureus*) were found to have pituitary masses that were unassociated with previous experimental manipulation. Both animals were euthanized due to apparently unrelated clinical reasons. Histopathology and immunohistochemical staining classified these tumors as thyrotrophic and corticotrophic pituitary adenomas. These cases represent the first reports of this tumor type in squirrel monkeys.

Abbreviation: TSH, thyroid-stimulating hormone

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Pituitary tumors are a relatively common CNS neoplasm in humans. Antemortem prevalence is difficult to estimate because of the presence of subclinical neoplasms.^{2,11,13,18,19} Pituitary tumors are often classified histologically by the dominant cell type according to immunohistochemical identification of hormonal cell products.²² In NHP, pituitary tumors are reported infrequently in the literature.^{4,5,21,25,28} We here present 2 spontaneous pituitary tumors in squirrel monkeys.

Case History

Both animals were socially housed with conspecifics in an AAALAC-accredited facility (Yerkes National Primate Research Center, Atlanta, Georgia). All aspects of animal care and use noted in this case report were in accordance with the 8th edition of the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* and the Animal Welfare Act.^{1,10} Both squirrel monkeys were assigned to neuropharmacology protocols, and each had been implanted with a cranial microdialysis chamber and acrylic cap. Neither animal had been on active study for at least 3 y prior to clinical presentation (described later).

Case 1. An 18-y-old male squirrel monkey presented with sudden onset of extreme lethargy and minimal response to stimulation. His previous medical history included 3 skin infections around the acrylic cap between 2002 and 2003; these infections responded to medical management. He had no other recorded medical history. Physical exam at presentation revealed hypothermia, pallor, thin body condition, and severe hypoglycemia. Supportive treatment was initiated, but the animal died shortly after presentation. A definitive cause of death was not evident after postmortem evaluation and histopathologic review, but there was evidence of inanition and metabolic abnormalities (hepatic lipidosis, pancreatic acinar vacuolation, and apoptosis)

which may have contributed to the animal's death. The cause of these changes is unknown.

Case 2. A 19-y-old male squirrel monkey presented for lethargy and dermatitis. He was previously treated for a tooth root abscess, which responded to medical management. He had no other recorded medical history. Physical exam at presentation revealed patchy alopecia along the trunk, arms, and legs; arthritis of the stifles and spine; and considerable urine staining on his hair coat. Diagnostic testing revealed severe hyperglycemia, glucosuria, and mild dehydration. Supportive care was initiated, but the animal was euthanized a few days later due to declining clinical condition. A definitive cause of the clinical signs was not evident prior to euthanasia; the clinical signs may have been a result of the pituitary tumor.

Pathologic findings. In case 1, gross necropsy revealed a mass in the pituitary region; this lesion was approximately 3 to 4 mm in diameter; gray to tan in color; soft; and partially obscuring and replacing the optic chiasm (Figure 1 A). On cut section, the margins were poorly defined and blurred into the normal adjacent cerebral tissue. In case 2, gross necropsy revealed pituitary enlargement within the sella turcica, approximately 0.5 cm in diameter (Figure 1 B). For both cases, tissues were immersion-fixed in neutral-buffered formalin and routinely processed, embedded in paraffin, sectioned at 4 μ m, and stained with hematoxylin and eosin.

Histologic examination of pituitary sections from case 1 revealed a relatively poorly circumscribed mass composed of polygonal cells arranged in sheets and cords and supported by a fine fibrovascular stroma; the lesion was both compressive (Figure 2 A) and locally infiltrative (Figure 2 B). Histologic examination of case no. 2 revealed an expansile, unencapsulated, well-circumscribed, densely cellular neoplasm composed of polygonal cells arranged in nests and packets separated by fine fibrovascular stroma (Figure 2 C). Both tumors had similar morphologic characteristics. Neoplastic cells had well-defined borders with moderate amounts of granular eosinophilic cytoplasm, round to oval nuclei with evenly distributed chromatin, inconspicuous or a single centrally located small magenta nucleolus, and no mitoses detected. Occasionally neoplastic cells

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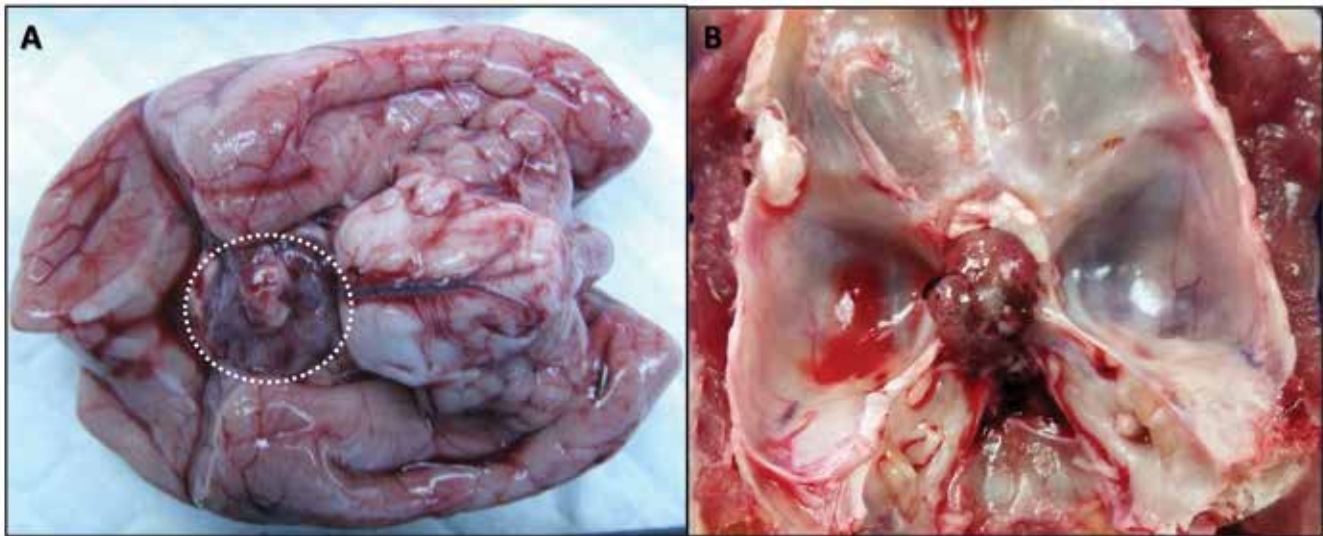


Figure 1. Gross necropsy findings demonstrating spontaneously occurring pituitary adenomas in 2 squirrel monkeys (*Saimiri sciureus*). (A) In case 1, the mass in the pituitary region (hashed circle) is gray to tan, soft, and partially obscures and replaces the optic chiasm. (B) Case 2 demonstrates pituitary enlargement within the sella turcica.

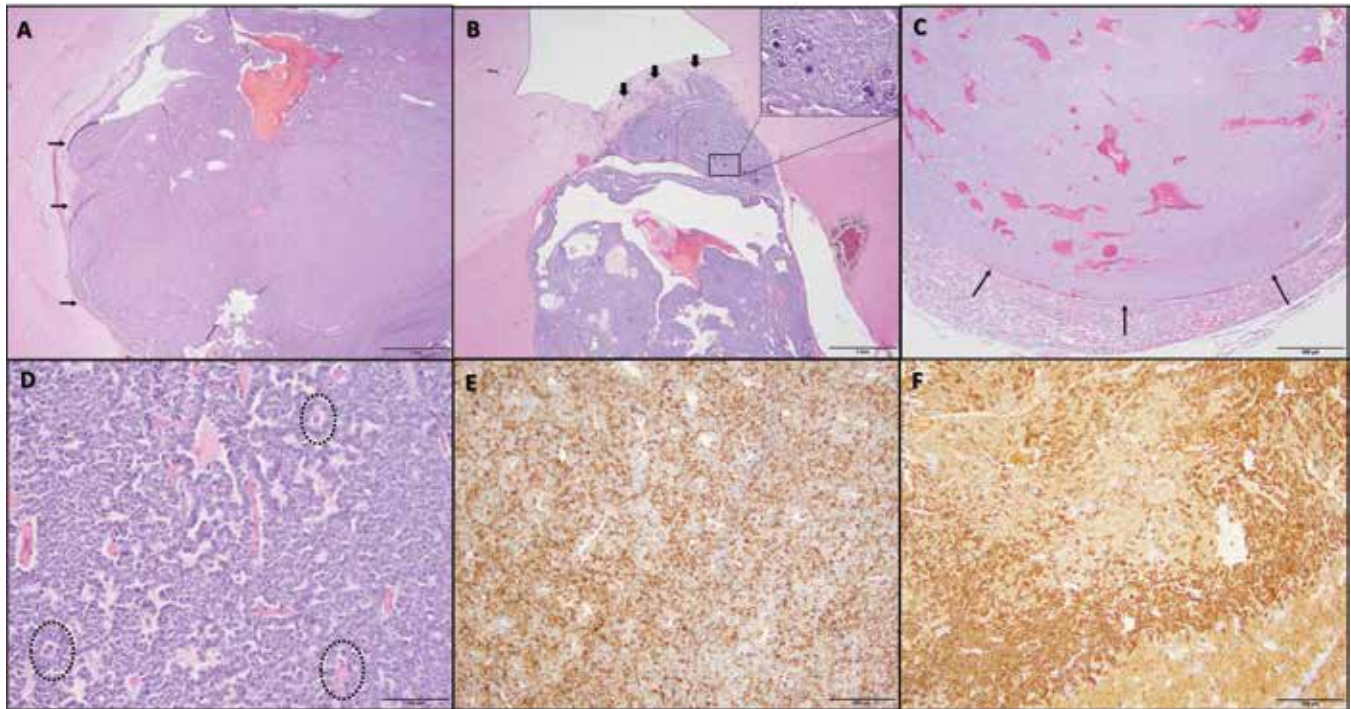


Figure 2. Microscopic findings of spontaneous pituitary adenomas in 2 squirrel monkeys (*Saimiri sciureus*). (A) The tumor in case no. 1 is unencapsulated and compresses the adjacent neuropil; scale, 1 mm. (B) The tumor in case no. 1 is also relatively poorly circumscribed and locally infiltrative, which led to the morphologic diagnosis of invasive pituitary adenoma; scale, 1 mm. (C) The tumor in case 2 is expansile, unencapsulated, and well-circumscribed, leading to the morphologic diagnosis of pituitary adenoma; scale, 50 μ m. Both tumors are densely cellular and composed of polygonal cells arranged in sheets and cords, supported by a fine fibrovascular stroma, and (D) occasionally forming pseudorosettes (hashed lines); scale, 100 μ m. The tumor in case no. 1 also produced psammoma bodies (B, insert). (E) Immunohistochemical staining for thyroid-stimulating hormone in case 1 yielded strong cytoplasmic labeling of more than 90% of neoplastic cells; scale, 200 μ m. (F) In case 2, staining for ACTH yielded diffuse moderate to strong cytoplasmic labeling of neoplastic cells; scale, 200 μ m.

palisaded around blood vessels and formed pseudorosettes (Figure 2 D). In addition, the tumor from case no. 1 contained multiple foci of irregular, deeply basophilic crystalline material (psammoma bodies; Figure 2 B, insert) and occasional regions of necrosis. Local invasion into the adjacent cerebral parenchyma led to the diagnosis of invasive adenoma for case 1, according to the WHO classification of pituitary tumors,^{6,12} whereas case 2 was diagnosed as an adenoma.

To subclassify these tumors, unstained charged slides were submitted to Emory University Hospital to undergo immunohistochemical staining for thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH), adrenocorticotropic hormone, growth hormone, luteinizing hormone, follicle-stimulating hormone, and prolactin. Neoplastic cells in the tumor from case 1 yielded strong cytoplasmic labeling of more than 90% of neoplastic cells for TSH (Figure 2 E). All other immunostains were negative for this tumor, leading to

the final diagnosis of invasive thyrotrophic pituitary adenoma. Immunostaining of the tumor from case 2 yielded diffuse moderate to strong cytoplasmic labeling of neoplastic cells for ACTH (Figure 2 F). All other immunostains were negative for this tumor, leading to the final diagnosis of corticotrophic pituitary adenoma.

Discussion

To our knowledge, these cases represent the first reports of spontaneous pituitary tumors in squirrel monkeys. Pituitary tumors are uncommon in NHP and, because they are often clinically silent, are primarily diagnosed at necropsy. Historic colony reviews have yielded the most information concerning these neoplasms among laboratory-housed NHP. In a retrospective review of a cynomolgus macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*) colony, pituitary adenomas were identified in 14 of 491 necropsied animals during a 10-y period.²¹ Another medical record review for spontaneous neoplasms in 2 large rhesus macaque (*M. mulatta*) colonies comprising a combined 49 y of records yielded only 6 pituitary tumors.²⁵ Another facility identified 30 pituitary tumors in baboons (*Papio* spp.) over a 15-y period, with an average colony size of 4000 animals.⁵ Of 105 spontaneous neoplasms in chimpanzees reported in the literature, only 4 pituitary adenomas were identified.⁴ Nearly all reported NHP pituitary neoplasms have been histologically classified as adenomas, without distinguishing between invasive and noninvasive subtypes;^{4,5,21,25,28} a lone case report of a pituitary carcinoma was described in an anubis baboon.⁷ Described histologic features of pituitary adenomas were morphologically similar to those in the present cases. In humans, pituitary carcinomas comprise 0.1% to 0.2% of all pituitary tumors and require distant metastasis or entry into the cerebrospinal tract for a diagnosis of carcinoma over invasive adenoma.^{6,9,12,23}

Pituitary tumors are often classified by whether they are functional and by the hormone produced by the neoplastic cell type.^{14,22,27} A previous study characterizing pituitary adenomas in cynomolgus macaques identified lactotrophic, somatotrophic, corticotrophic, and plurihormonal adenomas.²¹ The immunohistochemical profile of the tumor in case 1 identified thyrotrophs as the predominant cell type, with more than 90% of neoplastic cells yielding strong cytoplasmic labeling with TSH immunostaining. The animal showed no clinical signs of central hyperthyroidism, suggesting that this tumor was hormonally nonfunctional. Nonfunctional thyrotrophic tumors with positive TSH immunoreactivity are well documented in humans and are more common than their functional counterparts.^{26,29} In case 2, the immunohistochemical profile revealed predominantly corticotrophs, consistent with the diffuse ACTH immunostaining. We attempted to measure serum cortisol on case 2 by using blood collected prior to euthanasia, however the previously reported values for normal squirrel monkey serum cortisol^{16,24} exceeded the detection limit of the assay used to assess our samples, thus yielding inconclusive results. The immunohistochemical profile for case 2 suggests that the pituitary tumor may have been responsible for the clinical signs, but we were unable to definitively confirm this association. Overall, thyrotrophic adenomas represent only 1% to 2% of reported human pituitary adenomas reported, whereas corticotrophic adenomas have been reported to account for between 5% to 17%.^{3,7,17,20,22} Recent advancements in transcription factor analysis have enhanced classification of nonfunctional adenomas in humans and suggest slightly higher prevalence rates for both tumor types than previously reported.^{15,17} The literature includes 2 case reports of thyrotrophic adenomas and 3 corticotrophic

adenomas occurring in cynomolgus macaques.^{21,28} Galactorrhea was appreciated in one cynomolgus macaque with a corticotrophic adenoma, whereas the remaining 4 animals lacked reported clinical signs.^{21,28} Added to those reports are the current cases of a nonfunctional invasive pituitary thyrotrophic adenoma and a potentially functional corticotrophic adenoma in squirrel monkeys.

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