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Oncologic Imaging Soft Tissue Tumors

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 Springer

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ISBN 978-981-287-717-8 ISBN 978-981-287-718-5 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-981-287-718-5

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017940416

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Printed on acid-free paper

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The registered company is Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.
The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore
189721, Singapore

To my coauthors, Sung Hwan Hong, Ja-Young Choi, and Hye Jin Yoo, for their passion, excellence, and cooperation.

And to my three lovely grandsons, wishing them a bright and prosperous future.

—Heung Sik Kang, MD

To all the teachers and colleagues who have brought me to this point.

And to my sweet wife, Yun Kyung, and daughter, Jisu, my buttress and love.

—Sung Hwan Hong, MD

To my colleagues and family.

And finally to my mentor, Professor Kang, for his new start.

—Ja-Young Choi, MD

To my colleagues without whom I would not be here.

To my family for their endless support.

And to my cute daughter, whose smile warms my heart with love.

—Hye Jin Yoo, MD

Preface

Diagnostic imaging of soft tissue tumors remains a challenge in musculoskeletal radiology. The difficulty can be attributed to the diversity of soft tissue tumors and the significant overlap in their imaging features. Moreover, confusion persists in the literature regarding the terminology of soft tissue tumors because their taxonomy has evolved over time.

Since the discovery of X-ray, radiologic examination has been widely used to assess bone tumors, whereas soft tissue tumor evaluation was not broadly possible until the introduction of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) in the early 1980s. Since then, remarkable progress has been made in the imaging of soft tissue tumors. Today, MRI is indispensable in the management of patients with soft tissue tumors, and its utility continues to increase as newly developed technologies become clinically available. As a result, radiology now plays a pivotal role in the detection, diagnosis, and treatment planning of soft tissue tumors.

This book presents a wide range of radiologically illustrated soft tissue tumors classified according to the 2013 WHO classification for soft tissue tumor. Not only radiologists but also other specialists should become well versed in the imaging evaluation of soft tissue tumors, to allow a multidisciplinary approach to treatment. As a radiology textbook, this book aims to familiarize readers with both the imaging findings and pattern analysis of soft tissue tumors. We hope that it will allow readers to improve their understanding of soft tissue tumors and facilitate communication among physicians.

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Contents

Part I General Considerations for the Diagnosis of Soft Tissue Tumors

1 Diagnostic Approach	3
1.1 Clinical Consideration	3
1.2 Imaging Modalities	4
1.2.1 Radiography	4
1.2.2 Ultrasonography	4
1.2.3 CT	4
1.2.4 MR Imaging	4
1.3 Benign Versus Malignant	5
1.4 Illustrations: Diagnostic Approach	6
1.4.1 Location of Soft Tissue Tumors	6
1.4.2 Soft Tissue Tumor in Clinical Syndrome	8
1.4.3 Radiographic Evaluation	9
1.4.4 Sonographic Evaluation	13
1.4.5 CT Evaluation	14
1.4.6 MR Imaging Evaluation	15
References	17
2 Diagnostic Procedure	19
2.1 Anatomic Compartments	19
2.1.1 Upper Extremity	19
2.1.2 Pelvis	19
2.1.3 Lower Extremity	20
2.2 Imaging-Guided Percutaneous Biopsy	20
2.3 Illustrations: Diagnostic Procedure	21
2.3.1 Anatomic Compartments	21
2.3.2 General Principles of Image-Guided Percutaneous Biopsy	24
References	26
3 Staging of Soft Tissue Sarcoma	27
3.1 Tumor (T-Staging)	27
3.2 Nodes (N-Stage)	28
3.3 Metastasis (M-Stage)	29
3.4 Histologic Grade (G-Stage)	29
3.5 Proposed Report Format	29

3.6	Illustrations: Staging of Soft Tissue Sarcoma	29
3.6.1	Stage I	29
3.6.2	Stage II	32
3.6.3	Stage III	33
3.6.4	Stage IV	35
	References	36

Part II WHO Classification of Soft Tissue Tumors and Radiologic Illustrations

4	Adipocytic Tumors	39
4.1	Lipoma	39
4.2	Lipomatosis	40
4.3	Lipomatosis of Nerve	40
4.4	Lipoblastoma/Lipoblastomatosis	40
4.5	Angiolipoma	41
4.6	Spindle Cell Lipoma	41
4.7	Hibernoma	41
4.8	Lipoma Arborescens	42
4.9	Atypical Lipomatous Tumor/Well-Differentiated Liposarcoma	42
4.10	Dedifferentiated Liposarcoma	42
4.11	Myxoid Liposarcoma	43
4.12	Pleomorphic Liposarcoma	44
4.13	Illustrations: Adipocytic Tumors	44
4.13.1	Lipoma	44
4.13.2	Lipomatosis	46
4.13.3	Lipomatosis of Nerve	47
4.13.4	Lipoblastoma	48
4.13.5	Angiolipoma	49
4.13.6	Spindle Cell Lipoma	50
4.13.7	Hibernoma	51
4.13.8	Lipoma Arborescens	53
4.13.9	Well-Differentiated Liposarcoma	54
4.13.10	Dedifferentiated Liposarcoma	56
4.13.11	Myxoid Liposarcoma	57
4.13.12	Pleomorphic Liposarcoma	60
	References	61
5	Fibroblastic/Myofibroblastic Tumors	63
5.1	Nodular Fasciitis	63
5.2	Proliferative Fasciitis	63
5.3	Proliferative Myositis	64
5.4	Myositis Ossificans	64
5.5	Elastofibroma	65
5.6	Fibrous Hamartoma of Infancy	65
5.7	Fibromatosis Colli	65
5.8	Fibroma of Tendon Sheath	66
5.9	Desmoplastic Fibroblastoma	66

5.10	Calcifying Aponeurotic Fibroma	66
5.11	Palmar/Plantar Fibromatosis	67
5.12	Desmoid-Type Fibromatosis	67
5.13	Dermatofibrosarcoma Protuberans.	67
5.14	Solitary Fibrous Tumor	68
5.15	Inflammatory Myofibroblastic Tumor	68
5.16	Myxofibrosarcoma	69
5.17	Low-Grade Fibromyxoid Sarcoma	69
5.18	Low-Grade Myofibroblastic Sarcoma	69
5.19	Sclerosing Epithelioid Fibrosarcoma.	69
5.20	Illustrations: Fibroblastic/Myofibroblastic Tumors	70
5.20.1	Nodular Fasciitis	70
5.20.2	Proliferative Fasciitis	73
5.20.3	Proliferative Myositis.	74
5.20.4	Myositis Ossificans	76
5.20.5	Elastofibroma Dorsi.	80
5.20.6	Fibrous Hamartoma of Infancy	81
5.20.7	Fibromatosis Colli	83
5.20.8	Fibroma of Tendon Sheath.	84
5.20.9	Desmoplastic Fibroblastoma	87
5.20.10	Calcifying Aponeurotic Fibroma.	89
5.20.11	Palmar/Plantar Fibromatosis	90
5.20.12	Desmoid-Type Fibromatosis	91
5.20.13	Dermatofibrosarcoma Protuberans.	94
5.20.14	Solitary Fibrous Tumor	96
5.20.15	Inflammatory Myofibroblastic Tumor	98
5.20.16	Myxofibrosarcoma.	99
5.20.17	Low-Grade Fibromyxoid Sarcoma	101
5.20.18	Low-Grade Myofibroblastic Sarcoma	104
5.20.19	Sclerosing Epithelioid Fibrosarcoma.	106
	References.	106
6	So-Called Fibrohistiocytic Tumors	109
6.1	Tenosynovial Giant Cell Tumor.	109
6.2	Deep Benign Fibrous Histiocytoma.	110
6.3	Giant Cell Tumor of Soft Tissue	110
6.4	Illustrations: So-Called Fibrohistiocytic Tumors.	111
6.4.1	Tenosynovial Giant Cell Tumor, Localized Type	111
6.4.2	Tenosynovial Giant Cell Tumor, Diffuse Type	115
6.4.3	Giant Cell Tumor of Soft Tissue	118
6.4.4	Deep Benign Fibrous Histiocytoma.	119
	References.	120
7	Smooth Muscle Tumors	121
7.1	Leiomyoma of Deep Soft Tissue	121
7.2	Leiomyosarcoma	121
7.3	Illustrations: Smooth Muscle Tumors	122
7.3.1	Leiomyoma of Deep Soft Tissue	122
7.3.2	Leiomyosarcoma	126
	References.	129

8	Pericytic (Perivascular) Tumors	131
8.1	Glomus Tumor	131
8.2	Myopericytoma, Including Myofibroma	132
8.3	Angioleiomyoma	132
8.4	Illustrations: Pericytic (Perivascular) Tumors	133
8.4.1	Glomus Tumor	133
8.4.2	Glomangioma	137
8.4.3	Glomangiomatosis	138
8.4.4	Myofibroma	139
8.4.5	Myopericytoma	142
8.4.6	Angioleiomyoma	143
	References	147
9	Skeletal Muscle Tumors	149
9.1	Rhabdomyosarcoma	149
9.2	Illustrations: Skeletal Muscle Tumors	150
9.2.1	Embryonal Rhabdomyosarcoma	150
9.2.2	Alveolar Rhabdomyosarcoma	151
9.2.3	Pleomorphic Rhabdomyosarcoma	152
9.2.4	Spindle Cell Rhabdomyosarcoma	155
	References	156
10	Vascular Tumors	157
10.1	Hemangiomas	157
10.2	Angiomatosis	158
10.3	Lymphangioma	159
10.4	Kaposiform Hemangioendothelioma	159
10.5	Retiform Hemangioendothelioma	159
10.6	Kaposi Sarcoma	159
10.7	Epithelioid Hemangioendothelioma	160
10.8	Angiosarcoma of Soft Tissue	160
10.9	Illustrations: Vascular Tumors	161
10.9.1	Hemangioma	161
10.9.2	Synovial Hemangioma	162
10.9.3	Intramuscular Angioma	164
10.9.4	Ossifying Intramuscular Angioma	168
10.9.5	Venous Hemangioma	169
10.9.6	Arteriovenous Malformation/Hemangioma	171
10.9.7	Angiomatosis	172
10.9.8	Lymphangioma	173
10.9.9	Kaposiform Hemangioendothelioma	175
10.9.10	Retiform Hemangioendothelioma	177
10.9.11	Kaposi Sarcoma	178
10.9.12	Epithelioid Hemangioendothelioma	179
10.9.13	Angiosarcoma of Soft Tissue	182
	References	184
11	Chondro-Osseous Tumors	185
11.1	Soft Tissue Chondroma	185
11.2	Extraskeletal Osteosarcoma	185
11.3	Illustrations: Chondro-Osseous Tumors	186

11.3.1	Soft Tissue Chondroma	186
11.3.2	Extraskelatal Osteosarcoma	190
	References	191
12	Nerve Sheath Tumors	193
12.1	Schwannoma (Including Variants)	193
12.2	Neurofibroma (Including Variants)	194
12.3	Perineurioma	195
12.4	Granular Cell Tumor	195
12.5	Malignant Peripheral Nerve Sheath Tumor	196
12.6	Illustrations: Nerve Sheath Tumors	197
12.6.1	Schwannoma	197
12.6.2	Cellular Schwannoma	201
12.6.3	Plexiform Schwannoma	202
12.6.4	Ancient Schwannoma	204
12.6.5	Neurofibroma	207
12.6.6	Extraneural Perineurioma	211
12.6.7	Intraneural Perineurioma	212
12.6.8	Granular Cell Tumor	213
12.6.9	Malignant Granular Cell Tumor	215
12.6.10	Malignant Peripheral Nerve Sheath Tumor	216
	References	220
13	Tumors of Uncertain Differentiation	221
13.1	Intramuscular Myxoma	221
13.2	Synovial Sarcoma	222
13.3	Phosphaturic Mesenchymal Tumor	222
13.4	Epithelioid Sarcoma	223
13.5	Alveolar Soft Part Sarcoma	224
13.6	Clear Cell Sarcoma	224
13.7	Extraskelatal Myxoid Chondrosarcoma	225
13.8	Extraskelatal Ewing Sarcoma	225
13.9	Extrarenal Malignant Rhabdoid Tumor	226
13.10	Myoepithelioma/Parachordoma	226
13.11	Pleomorphic Hyalinizing Angiectatic Tumor	226
13.12	Illustrations: Tumors of Uncertain Differentiation	227
13.12.1	Intramuscular Myxoma	227
13.12.2	Synovial Sarcoma	230
13.12.3	Phosphaturic Mesenchymal Tumor	234
13.12.4	Epithelioid Sarcoma	236
13.12.5	Angiosarcoma	239
13.12.6	Clear Cell Sarcoma	241
13.12.7	Extraskelatal Myxoid Chondrosarcoma	243
13.12.8	Extraskelatal Ewing Sarcoma	245
13.12.9	Extrarenal Rhabdoid Tumor	247
13.12.10	Myoepithelioma	248
13.12.11	Pleomorphic Hyalinizing Angiectatic Tumor of Soft Part	249
	References	250

14	Undifferentiated/Unclassified Sarcoma	253
14.1	Undifferentiated Pleomorphic Sarcoma	253
14.2	Undifferentiated Round Cell and Spindle Cell Sarcoma	254
14.3	Illustrations: Undifferentiated/Unclassified Sarcoma	255
14.3.1	Undifferentiated Pleomorphic Sarcoma	255
14.3.2	CIC-DUX4 Fusion Positive Undifferentiated Round Cell Sarcoma	261
	References	262
15	Superficial Soft Tissue Masses	263
15.1	Epidermal Inclusion Cyst	263
15.2	Pilomatricoma	264
15.3	Fat Necrosis	264
15.4	Rheumatoid Nodule	265
15.5	Morel-Lavallee Lesion	265
15.6	Malignant Melanoma	266
15.7	Lymphoma (Cutaneous and Subcutaneous)	266
15.8	Soft Tissue Metastasis	268
15.9	Illustrations: Superficial Soft Tissue Masses	269
15.9.1	Epidermal Inclusion Cyst	269
15.9.2	Pilomatricoma	272
15.9.3	Fat Necrosis	275
15.9.4	Rheumatoid Nodule	276
15.9.5	Morel-Lavallee Lesion	278
15.9.6	Malignant Melanoma	279
15.9.7	Lymphoma (Cutaneous and Subcutaneous)	283
15.9.8	Soft Tissue Metastasis	286
	References	287
16	Masses That May Mimic Soft Tissue Tumors	291
16.1	Ganglion	291
16.2	Vascular Lesion	291
16.3	Gout	292
16.4	Sarcoidosis	293
16.5	Morton's Neuroma	293
16.6	Traumatic Neuroma	294
16.7	Xanthoma	295
16.8	Illustrations: Masses That May Mimic Soft Tissue Tumors	296
16.8.1	Ganglion	296
16.8.2	Vascular Lesion	299
16.8.3	Gout	301
16.8.4	Sarcoidosis	303
16.8.5	Morton's Neuroma	306
16.8.6	Traumatic Neuroma	308
16.8.7	Xanthoma	311
	References	314

Part III Practical Pearls in Diagnosis of Soft Tissue Tumors

17	Lesion Characterization Based on MR Signal Intensities	317
17.1	T1 Hyperintense Lesions	319
17.1.1	Lesion Containing Fat	319
17.1.2	Lesion Containing Methemoglobin	322
17.1.3	Lesion Containing Proteinaceous Material	323
17.1.4	Lesion Containing Melanin	324
17.2	T2 Hypointense Lesions	325
17.2.1	Lesion Containing Fibrous Tissue	325
17.2.2	Lesion Containing Mineralization	329
17.2.3	Lesion Containing Free Cholesterol	334
17.2.4	Lesion Containing High-Flow Vessels	334
17.3	T2 Fluid-Equivalent Hyperintense Lesions	337
17.3.1	Lesion Containing Fluid	337
17.3.2	Lesion Containing Myxoid Tissue	339
17.3.3	Vascular Lesion	342
17.3.4	Lesions Containing Cartilage	343
18	Diagnostic Signs	345
18.1	Bowl of Grapes Sign	345
18.2	Bunch of Grapes Appearance	346
18.3	Checkerboard Appearance	347
18.4	Coaxial Cable-Like Appearance	348
18.5	Dark Star Sign	349
18.6	Fascicular Sign	350
18.7	Inverted Target Sign	351
18.8	Gyriform Pattern	352
18.9	Reverse Target Sign	353
18.10	Reverse Zoning Phenomenon	354
18.11	Spaghetti-Like Appearance	355
18.12	Split Fat Sign	356
18.13	String Sign	357
18.14	Stripe Sign	358
18.15	Swiss Cheese Appearance	359
18.16	Tail Sign	360
18.17	Target Sign	361
18.18	Three Stripes Sign	362
18.19	Triple Signal Sign	363
18.20	Zonal Phenomenon	364
19	Syndrome-Associated Soft Tissue Tumors	365
19.1	Kasabach-Merritt Syndrome	366
19.2	Maffucci Syndrome	368
19.3	Klippel-Trenaunay Syndrome	370
19.4	Mazabraud Syndrome	371
19.5	Neurofibromatosis Type 1	372

19.6 Neurofibromatosis Type 2 376
19.7 Schwannomatosis..... 379
19.8 Carney Complex 380
19.9 Familial Hypercholesterolemia 382

Part IV Drill and Practice

20 Image Interpretation Session 387
20.1 Quiz 388
20.2 Quiz 390
20.3 Quiz 392
20.4 Quiz 394
20.5 Quiz 396
20.6 Quiz 398
20.7 Quiz 400
20.8 Quiz 402
20.9 Quiz 404
20.10 Quiz 406
20.11 Quiz 408
20.12 Quiz 410
20.13 Quiz 412
20.14 Quiz 414
20.15 Quiz 416
20.16 Quiz 418
20.17 Quiz 420
20.18 Quiz 422
20.19 Quiz 424
20.20 Quiz 426
20.21 Quiz 428
20.22 Quiz 430
20.23 Quiz 432
20.24 Quiz 434
20.25 Quiz 436
20.26 Quiz 438
20.27 Quiz 440
20.28 Quiz 442
20.29 Quiz 444
20.30 Quiz 446
20.31 Quiz 448
20.32 Quiz 450
20.33 Quiz 452

Part I

**General Considerations for the Diagnosis
of Soft Tissue Tumors**

1.1 Clinical Consideration

The vast majority of soft tissue masses that present to physicians are benign lesions. The incidence of benign soft tissue tumors is estimated to outnumber malignant tumors by a factor of at least 100 (Balach et al. 2011). Unlike their intraosseous counterparts, it is often not possible to establish a meaningful differential diagnosis for soft tissue tumors or reliably determine if they are benign or malignant. In these cases, knowledge of the soft tissue tumor's prevalence, along with the patient's age and the lesion's location, will allow a suitably ordered differential diagnosis (Kransdorf 1995). Embryonal rhabdomyosarcoma occurs most often in children under 10 years of age, while synovial sarcoma is most prevalent in adolescents and young adults. Most soft tissue sarcomas, including undifferentiated pleomorphic sarcoma, liposarcoma, and leiomyosarcoma, dominate in the elderly. The most common tumors in childhood and adolescence are, in order of prevalence, hemangioma, fibrous hamartoma, granuloma annulare, lipoblastoma, fibrosarcoma, and rhabdomyosarcoma. The most common tumors in adults are lipoma, liposarcoma, and myxofibrosarcoma (De Schepper and Bloem 2007).

Lesion locations include subcutaneous, perifascial, intramuscular, intermuscular, and intra-articular/periarticular. The lesion location is

important for limiting the differential diagnosis (Walker et al. 2011a). For example, the majority of soft tissue myxomas are intramuscular, whereas myxoid liposarcomas are usually intermuscular lesions (Murphey et al. 2002). Certain tumors are known for their inherent predilections for specific locations, such as elastofibroma, which is typically found in the infrascapular or subscapular area. In a similar fashion, recognizing that a lesion arises from a specific structure (e.g., nerves, vessels, or tendons) can help in lesion characterization (Wu and Hochman 2009). A multifocal or an extensive lesion also limits diagnostic considerations to include angiomatous lesions, neurofibromatosis (NF), fibromatosis, lipomatosis, myxoma (Mazabraud syndrome), metastases, or lymphoma (Walker et al. 2011b).

Clinical history may be relevant in systemic or concomitant diseases, such as melanotic schwannoma in Carney syndrome (cardiac myxoma, spotty pigmentation, and endocrine overactivity), cavernous hemangioma in Maffucci syndrome (enchondromatosis), fibromatosis in Gardner syndrome (intestinal polyposis, osteomata), xanthoma in familial hypercholesterolemia, myxoma in Mazabraud syndrome (polyostotic fibrous dysplasia), amyloidoma in multiple myeloma and neurofibromatosis type II and schwannomatosis (De Schepper and Bloem 2007).

1.2 Imaging Modalities

1.2.1 Radiography

Although the utility of radiographs in evaluating soft tissue lesions is rather limited, some radiographic findings help to detect or characterize soft tissue lesions. At radiography, lipoma or well-differentiated liposarcoma can be appreciated as a low-density mass. If radiography shows a soft tissue mass with multiple phleboliths, it is most likely hemangioma. A soft tissue mass with a central amorphous bone formation is suggestive of extraskelatal osteosarcoma, whereas a soft tissue lesion with peripheral shell-like mineralization is characteristic of myositis ossificans. The presence of multiple punctate or curvilinear calcifications is indicative of an extraskelatal chondroid tumor. Other examples of intratumoral mineralization include pilomatricoma, calcifying aponeurotic fibroma, gouty tophus, and synovial sarcoma. Localized cortical thickening or hyperostosis may occur adjacent to soft tissue hemangiomas or lipomas (Ly et al. 2003; Kim et al. 1999). Any tumor involvement with the adjacent bone may be better evaluated with radiography than with MR imaging. For example, long-term pressure erosion may be easily distinguished from an aggressive permeative destructive pattern on radiography, whereas it may be confusing on MR imaging (Manaster 2013).

1.2.2 Ultrasonography

Because of its safety, availability, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness, ultrasonography (US) is frequently used as the initial imaging technique in the evaluation of soft tissue masses. One of the primary roles of US is to determine whether a mass is a cyst or a solid tumor. Superficial soft tissue masses are particularly amenable to high-resolution US, which allows a detailed assessment of the distinguishing ultrasound characteristics that enable a specific tumor diagnosis based on recognized ultrasound appearances (Hung et al. 2014). Malignant tumors are usually hypoechoic and often are hypervascular, but the sonographic appearances of solid soft tissue tumors are otherwise usually

nonspecific (Hwang and Panicek 2009). US is in most instances the primary imaging modality in the evaluation of soft tissue masses in children and is particularly useful in the diagnosis of vascular lesions (Navarro 2011). US is the most popular imaging modality for biopsies of soft tissue tumors. Sonographic guidance is suitable for targeting viable tissues, avoiding necrotic portions in soft tissue tumors, and obviating the risk of neurovascular injury.

1.2.3 CT

Although MR imaging is preferred for evaluating soft tissue tumor imaging, there are distinguishing CT characteristics that can suggest a specific diagnosis, including the lesion's mineralization pattern, density, pattern of adjacent bone involvement, and degree and pattern of vascularity (Subhawong et al. 2010). CT remains superior to radiography and MR imaging in demonstrating soft tissue mineralization, and the mineralization pattern of soft tissue masses can be a clue for the histologic diagnosis. In myositis ossificans, for example, CT is more sensitive than MR imaging in detecting early-stage mineralization with zonal phenomenon. Lesion density can also suggest a histologic diagnosis, particularly in soft tissue masses containing fat density. CT is excellent in delineating the presence and pattern of bone involvement in soft tissue tumors, which are important factors during preoperative planning. CT has also become essential in radiation therapy, and the use of CT has resulted in greater precision in dose distribution, patient positioning, and 3D dose calculation (Pereira et al. 2014).

1.2.4 MR Imaging

MR imaging is the diagnostic modality of choice for soft tissue tumors due to the high tissue contrast and multiplanar capability. MR imaging is well suited for not only the diagnosis but also for the staging, preoperative planning, postsurgical evaluation, and post-therapy surveillance of soft tissue tumors. MR images can be particularly useful for characterizing benign lesions that do

not require imaging follow-up or biopsy, such as lipomas and ganglia. In cases where a soft tissue lesion is indeterminate based on the clinical and imaging features, a biopsy should be considered (Wu and Hochman 2009).

A combination of T1- and T2-weighted images is the mainstay of MR imaging of soft tissue tumors. Fat-suppression techniques are widely adopted to enhance the dynamic ranges and sensitivity of fast spin echo T2-weighted images and gadolinium-enhanced T1-weighted images. A T2*-weighted gradient-echo sequence is helpful in the detection of blood products, such as hemosiderin. The administration of intravenous gadolinium chelates is used to distinguish cystic from solid components to identify viable and necrotic areas, to show the relative vascularity of tumors, and to delineate the true margin of tumors.

Most soft tissue tumors are T1 isointense or hypointense and T2 hyperintense in signal intensity. The presence of T1 hyperintensity or T2 hypointensity in soft tissue tumors is occasionally found and helpful in differential diagnosis when present. An intratumoral T1 hyperintensity is suggestive of fat, subacute hemorrhage, high proteinaceous fluid, or melanin. Fat-suppression techniques are helpful to distinguish fat from the other T1-hyperintense materials. T2-hypointense substances include calcifications/ossifications, hemorrhages, vascular signal voids, or collagenous tissues. The T2-hypointense element can be a clue of some benign soft tissue tumors such as tenosynovial giant cell tumor, fibromatosis, and desmoplastic fibroblastoma. However, various soft tissue sarcomas may also have T2-hypointense components. Fluid-containing lesions exhibit very high signal intensity on T2-weighted images, which allows the specific diagnosis of cystic masses, such as ganglion or bursitis. Myxoid tumors also exhibit very high signal on T2-weighted images because of their high water content. Contrast enhancement is helpful to differentiate these bright T2-weighted signal intensity lesions. Contrast-enhanced MR images also show the vascularity of soft tissue tumors. Although malignant lesions are apt to show rapid and greater enhancement, the presence of contrast enhancement does not distinguish benign from malignant tumors.

1.3 Benign Versus Malignant

MR imaging provides clear advantages in terms of differential diagnosis of soft tissue tumors. There is, however, much controversy regarding the value of MR imaging in the differentiation of benign and malignant soft tissue tumors. MR imaging differentiation between benign and malignant tumors is complicated by the low prevalence of these lesions, the minimal experience of radiologists in non-dedicated hospitals, the ambiguous information on MR signal intensities, the highly variable histological findings, and the natural evolution of the lesions (Garcia-Gomez et al. 2004).

The definite malignant indicators are distant metastasis and adjacent organ invasion. The likelihood of malignancy also increases with the presence of tumor necrosis, neurovascular encasement, and bone invasion. The integrity of the deep fascia may also be a differential factor. The trend toward invasive behavior is greater in malignant than in benign tumors, and the destruction of the deep fascia on MR imaging can be a useful imaging finding in identifying malignant tumors (Liu et al. 2011).

Although benign tumors tend to be well delineated and some malignant tumors have ill-defined margins, several studies have concluded that the margin of a soft tissue mass on MR imaging is of no statistical relevance in predicting malignancy (De Schepper et al. 2000). In fact, most soft tissue tumors have well-defined margins regardless of whether they are benign or malignant. The administration of a contrast agent provides further information on the MR imaging characteristics of soft tissue tumors; however, it does not permit the discrimination between benign and malignant lesions when evaluated qualitatively. Dynamic contrast enhancement MR imaging can be used to differentiate malignant from benign soft tissue tumors (Tuncbilek et al. 2005).

In superficial soft tissue tumors, which are defined as masses located within the subcutaneous layer, the following various imaging features are known to be related to malignancy: lobulation, hemorrhage, necrosis, fascial edema, skin thickening, and skin contact. However, size was not found to be an important determining factor for malignancy, with a significant proportion of malignant

superficial sarcomas measuring less than 5 cm in maximal diameter (Calleja et al. 2012).

A study to assess the accuracy of MR imaging in predicting malignancy revealed that the absence of low signal intensity on T2-weighted images, a mean diameter greater than 33 mm, and a heterogeneous signal on T1-weighted images were the most sensitive indicators of malignant soft tissue tumors. MR imaging features with the highest specificity were evidence of necrosis, bone or neurovascular involvement, or metasta-

ses and a mean diameter greater than 66 mm (De Schepper et al. 1992).

A simplified systemic MR imaging approach has been proposed to help predict the benign or malignant nature of soft tissue tumors (Chung et al. 2012). The combination of the following three parameters arranged in order resulted in a higher diagnostic value for malignancy: signal intensity (heterogeneity on T2-weighted images), size (≥ 50 mm), and depth (deep relative to the superficial investing fascia).

1.4 Illustrations: Diagnostic Approach

1.4.1 Location of Soft Tissue Tumors

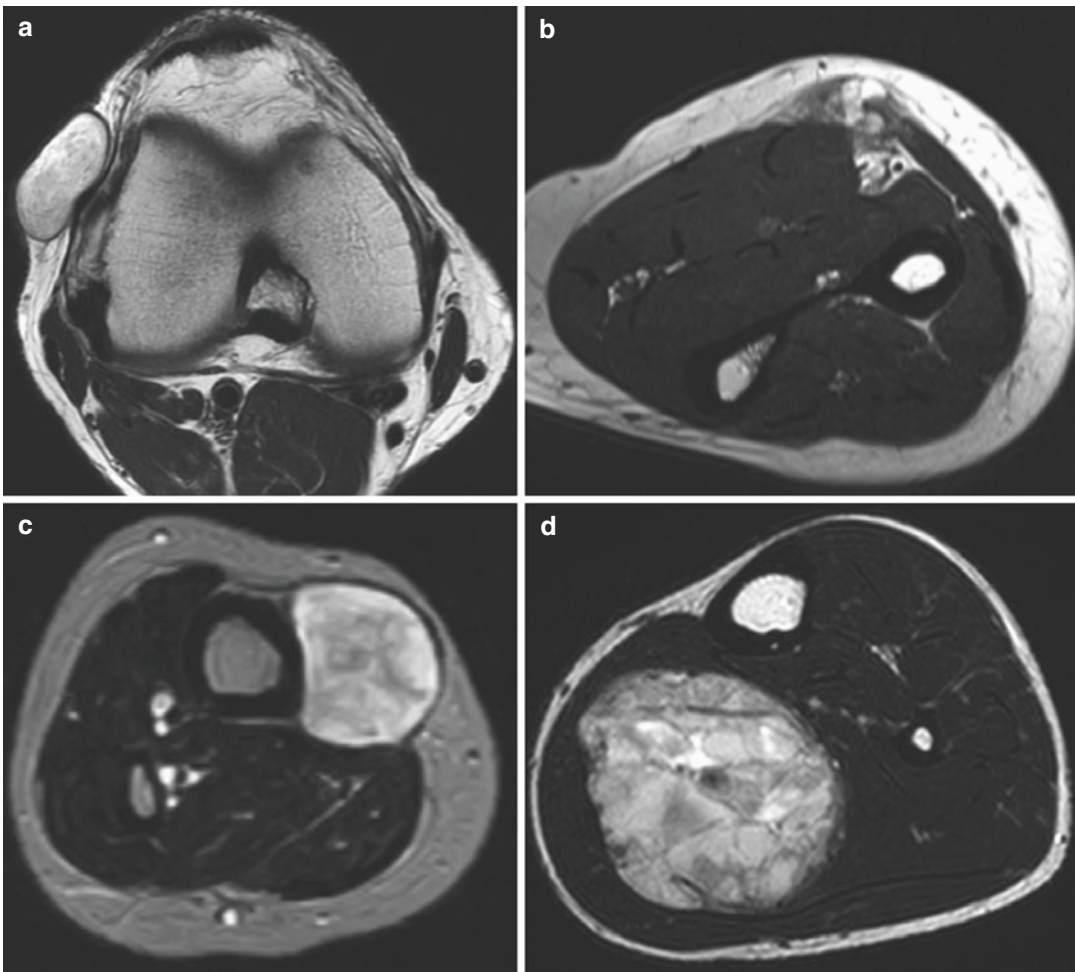


Fig. 1.1 Location of soft tissue tumors. Axial T2WIs show subcutaneous (a), perifascial (b), subfascial (c), and intramuscular (d) masses

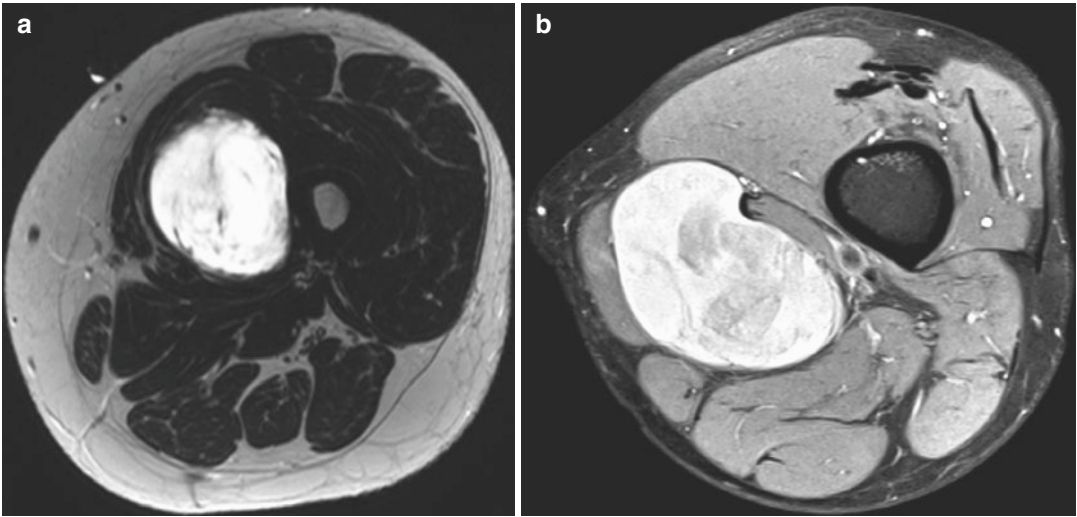


Fig. 1.2 Intra-versus intermuscular location. Axial T2WI (a) shows an intramuscular myxoma in the left vastus medialis. Axial FS PDWI (b) shows an intermuscular mass proven to be a myxoid liposarcoma in the left thigh

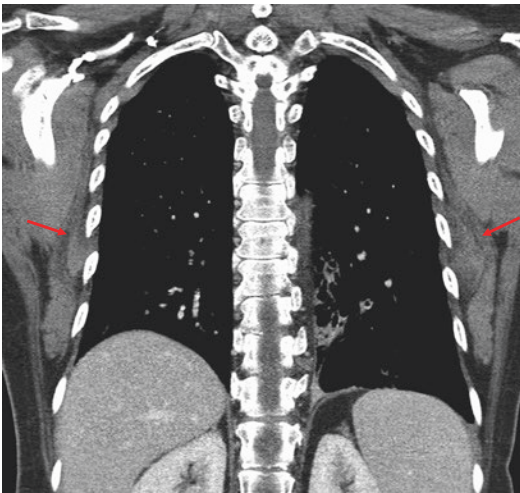
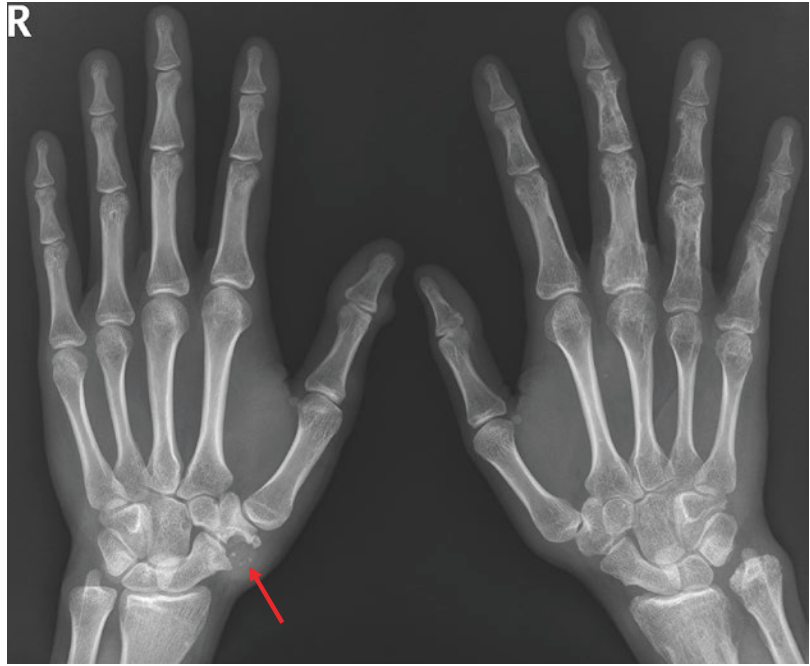


Fig. 1.3 Elastofibroma dorsi. There are bilateral symmetrical soft tissue masses (*arrows*) in the chest wall between the rib cage and serratus anterior. This tumor almost always arises in this very specific location

1.4.2 Soft Tissue Tumor in Clinical Syndrome

Fig. 1.4 Soft tissue hemangioma in Maffucci syndrome. AP radiograph of both hands shows multiple enchondromas in the left hand and wrist. There is a soft tissue hemangioma (*arrow*) with multiple calcific foci and adjacent bone erosions on the radial side of the right wrist



1.4.3 Radiographic Evaluation

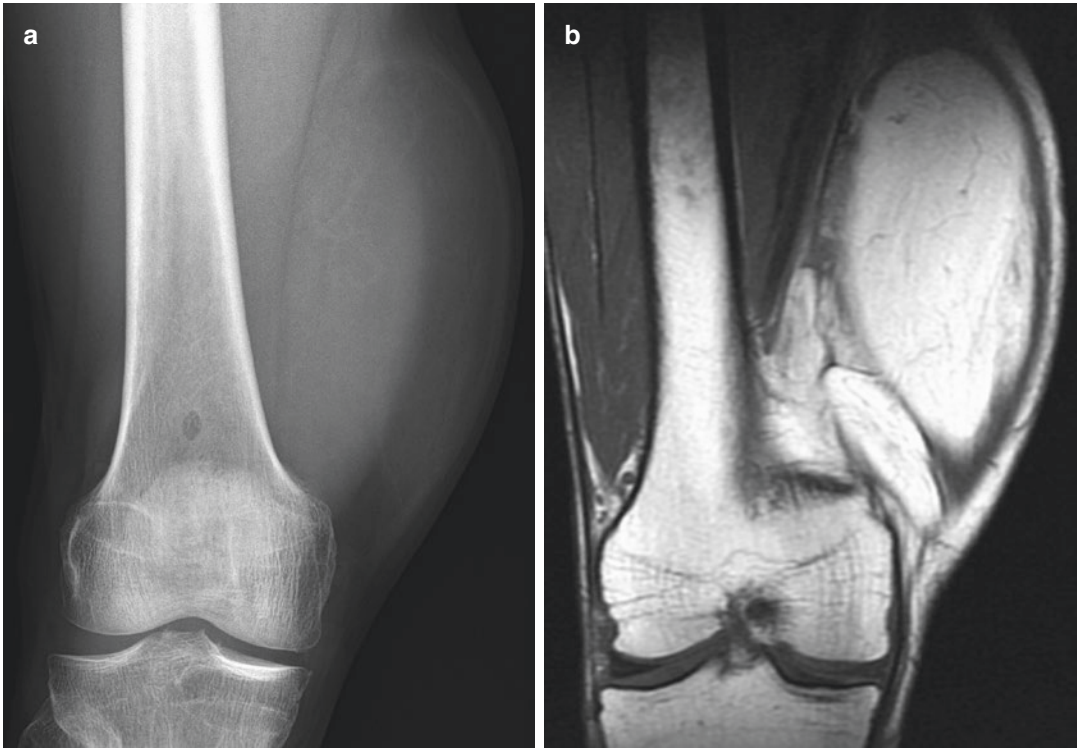


Fig. 1.5 Well-differentiated liposarcoma. AP radiograph of the right knee (a) shows a large soft tissue mass with low density indicating fat component. Coronal T1WI (b)

shows a large fatty mass on the medial side of the right distal thigh

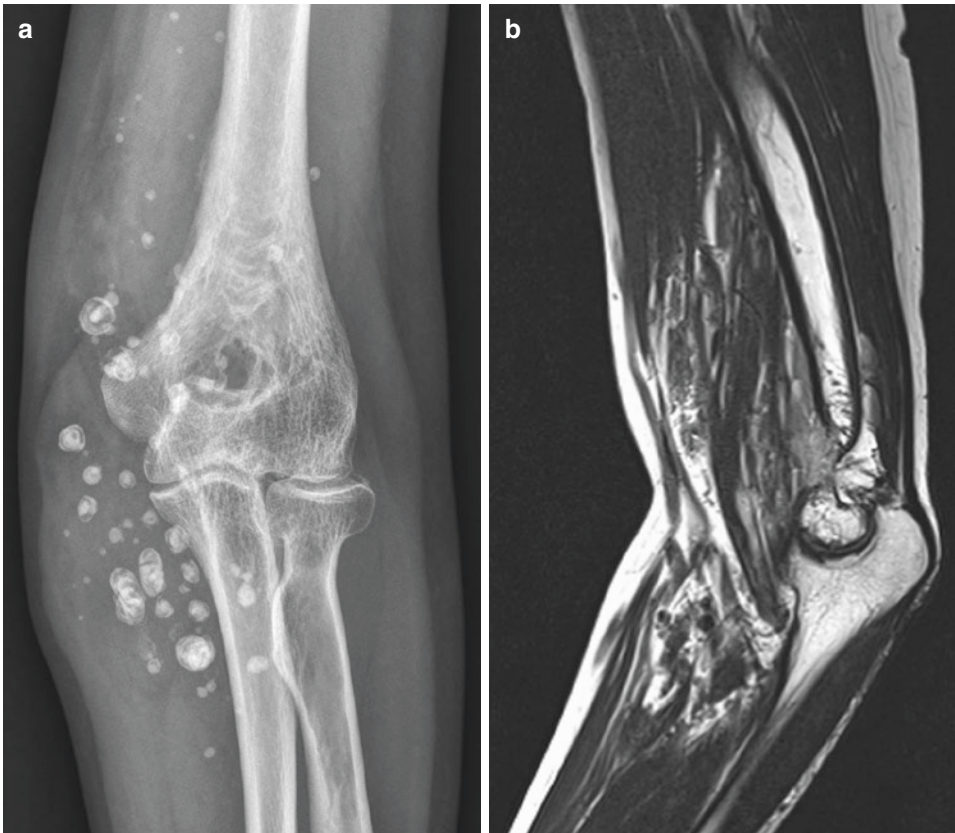


Fig. 1.6 Hemangioma. AP radiograph of the left elbow (a) shows a large soft tissue mass with numerous phleboliths. Sagittal T2WI (b) shows a complex and infiltrative soft tissue mass with multiple fluid-fluid levels on the left anterior elbow

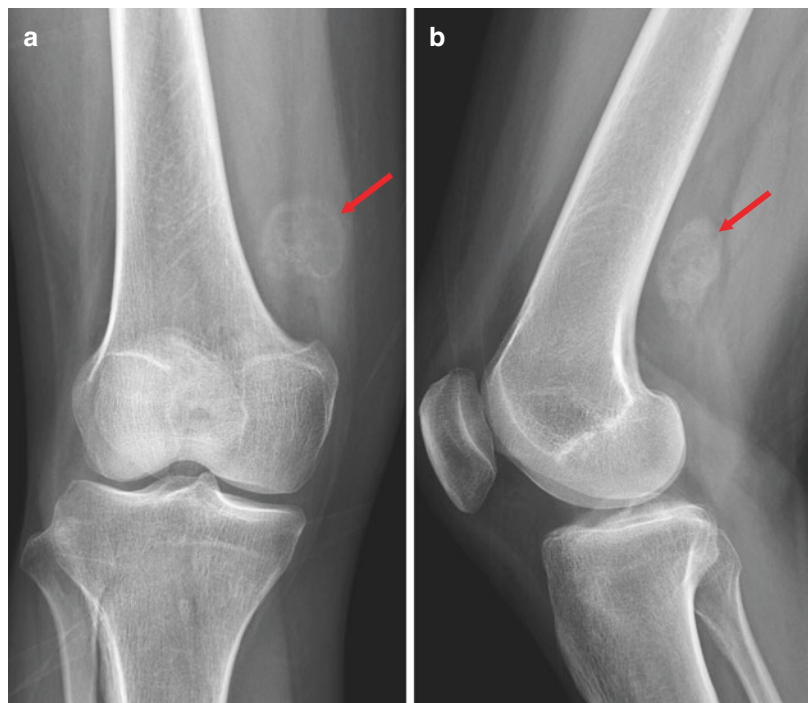


Fig. 1.7 Myositis ossificans. AP (a) and lateral (b) radiographs of the right knee show a mineralized soft tissue mass (arrow) on the posteromedial side of the right distal femur. The mineralization pattern is consistent with myositis ossificans, which exhibits a characteristic zonal phenomenon



Fig. 1.8 Synovial sarcoma. AP oblique radiograph (a) shows a nonspecific calcification (*arrow*) on the lateral side of the left mid lower leg. Coronal postcontrast FS

T1WI (b) shows a poorly demarcated enhancing soft tissue mass with a central low signal calcification (*arrow*), one of the well-known features of synovial sarcoma

Fig. 1.9 Cortical hyperostosis adjacent to soft tissue hemangioma. AP radiograph of the right thigh (**a**) shows a segmental cortical thickening (*arrow*) on the lateral side of the right femur proximal diaphysis. Coronal FS T2WI (**b**) shows an extensive soft tissue hemangioma with cortical hyperostosis (*arrow*) in the right proximal femur

