Lipoma Arborescens: A Differential Diagnosis
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**Background:** A seventeen year old male basketball player presented to his physician with pain and inflammation after feeling a popping sensation during a cutting drill. The athlete was initially diagnosed with an MCL tear. This was the initial injury to the athlete’s left knee. **Differential Diagnosis:** Initially, the athlete suffered a grade two second degree MCL tear. The subsequent development of chronic pain and swelling provoked a review of his case. A plication was thought to be causing the joint irritation. After the plica was removed, swelling returned and remained within the joint. The possibility of infection was then considered. After an exploratory arthroscopic procedure, the athlete was diagnosed with lipoma arborescens. The physician discovered particles of the tumor within the joint at the time of the exploration.

**Treatment:** Initial treatments included immobilization to treat the MCL tear and an arthroscopic procedure to remove the plication. Once the diagnosis of Lipoma arborescens was decided, drainage of the fluid at regular intervals to decrease pain occurred. The physician also attempted tumor removal with no relief. Another option which was presented was a partial or full synovectomy to eradicate the tumor fully, but currently this has been denied by the patient. **Uniqueness:** This case is unique in that presentation of moderate to extreme swelling and pain can occur with a variation of knee pathologies, making Lipoma arborescens difficult to diagnose. Lipoma arborescens is a benign tumor, able to develop anywhere in the body, but is most commonly found in the knee (Bansal, 1988). Although rare, lipoma arborescens present similar signs and symptoms as many other knee pathologies. **Conclusions:** The purpose of this case study was to reiterate the importance of an accurate diagnosis in the knee, treatment options and similarities between knee pathologies. Therefore, no pathology should be excluded, but yet, eliminated by careful evaluation. At times, further diagnostic testing may be required. Once the pathology is determined, proper care may be administered since each pathology has a specific treatment guideline or protocol to follow. Knowing exact pathology, such as lipoma arborescens, allows for the best possible care. In order to be an effective clinician, an understanding of standard knee pathologies is necessary, but also the acceptance that there are rare and possibly unheard of cases that may arise. **Word Count:** 377