

DISEASES OF THE LYMPH NODES

**Sites:** Lymphoid tissue is widespread throughout the body but is particularly aggregated in the spleen and in the lymph nodes.

**Function:**

- (i) manufacture of lymphocytes
- (ii) filtration of particulate matter from the body fluids assisted by the phagocytic action of the reticulum cells
- (iii) sites of antibody production.

Inflammations:

- (1) Acute lymphadenitis -  
Any pyogenic and many non-pyogenic infections.  
Generalised or local enlargement, depending on the of the infection.  
The lymph node usually returns to normal when the inflammation subsides.
- (2) Chronic lymphadenitis -  
prolonged or chronic infections - these lymph nodes eventually undergo fibrous replacement.

Some infections have diagnostic changes in the lymph nodes:

- (i) bacterial, e.g. TB.
- (ii) viral, e.g. glandular fever (infectious mononucleosis)
- (iii) fungal, e.g. blastomycosis
- (iv) parasitic, e.g. toxoplasmosis
- (v) others, e.g. sarcoidosis.

Tumours:

The lymphomas: Generalised primary tumours of lymphoid tissue.

Examples: Hodgkin's Disease; lymphosarcoma.

Certain features common to all types :

- (i) lymph node enlargement
- (ii) spread is by one lymph node group to another(not bloodstream)
- (iii) young individuals are affected.
- (iv) a significant proportion show bone marrow involvement with appropriate haematological abnormalities such as anaemia.
- (v) some types closely related to leukaemias which may develop during the course of the disease.
- (vi) generally fatal, but prognosis has greatly improved for Hodgkin's disease in recent years.
- (vii) males are more commonly affected than females 2:1.