

# Diagnosing And Treating Solitary Fibrous Tumors in Thyroid. Significance of The Diagnostic Test

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Core Needle

## 1. Abstract

Solitary fibrous tumor (SFT) are a type of mesenchymal fibroblastic neoplasms that rarely metastasize. Thyroid localization is exceptional, with only 51 cases described worldwide to date. The diagnosis of these tumors can be suspected by imaging tests. In less than half of the cases described in the literature, a preoperative diagnostic biopsy has been performed, most of which have been fine needle aspiration. Fine needle aspiration, usually guided by ultrasound, is the gold standard for the diagnosis of thyroid nodules. Nevertheless, a core needle biopsy is more likely to give us the amount of material and information about the capsule to perform immunochemistry techniques that leads into a proper diagnosis.

## 1.2. Significance Statement

Solitary fibrous tumors are extremely uncommon, and it is

remarkable that they occur in the thyroid tissue. Selecting the appropriate preoperative test is crucial for accurate diagnosis and management. The accurate diagnosis can be made sooner and with fewer diagnostic procedures if a core needle biopsy is done as soon as we suspect this entity. We can use a less aggressive treatment plan when more dangerous diseases like medullary thyroid carcinoma are ruled out.

## 1.3. Introduction

Solitary fibrous tumor (SFT) are a type of mesenchymal fibroblastic neoplasms that rarely metastasize. For many years they have been known as hemangiopericytomas [1,2]. Although they have classically been related to the thoracic cavity, more than 50% of tumors are extrathoracic.

Thyroid localization is exceptional, with only 51 cases described worldwide to date (Table 1).

**Table 1:** summary of clinicopathological characteristics of the reported cases of thyroid SFT.

	Year	Ref.	Age	Sex	Size (cm) and Location	Mitosis (10Hp/field)	Necros	STAT 6	CD34	Risk*4	Treatment	Follow-up (months)
1	1993	Taccagni G. [3]	44	F	6 R	Escasa	NA	NA	NA	NA	RHT	NED (60)
2	1993	Taccagni G.	61	M	6 L	s	NA	NA	NA	NA	ST	NED (48)
3	1993	Taccagni G.	32	F	3.5 R	Escasa	NA	NA	NA	NA	RHT	NED (60)
4	1994	Cameselle-Tejreiro [4]	43	F	4 L	0	No	NA		Low	ST	NED (160)
5	1997	Kie JH. [5]	48	F	8 R	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	RHT	NA
6	1999	Brunemann RB. [6]	28	F	2.5	4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
7	2001	Rodríguez I. [7]	43	F	3.5 L	2	No	NA	Yes	Low	NA	NA
8	2001	Rodríguez	52	M	2.5 L	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	NA	NA

9	2001	I. Rodríguez	44	M	2 L	1	No	NA	Yes	Low	NA	NA
10	2001	I. Rodríguez	64	F	4 R	2	No	NA	Yes	Low	NA	NED (60)
11	2001	I. Rodríguez	53	M	6 L	1	No	NA	Yes	Low	NA	NED (60)
12	2001	I. Rodríguez	47	F	4.5 R	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	NA	NED (48)
13	2001	I. Rodríguez	64	F	3 L	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	NA	NA
14	2001	Deshmukh NS. [8]	56	M	8 R	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	RHT	NED (12)
15	2003	Bohórquez CL. [9]	68	M	ion	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	LHT	NA
16	2003	Parwani [10]	61	M	5 L	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	ST	NA
17	2003	Cameselle [11]	36	M	6 L	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	TT	NED (25)
18	2004	Babouk [12]	45	M	5 L	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	LHT	NA
19	2006	Tanahashi [13]	64	M	5 R	0	No	NA	NA	Low	ST	NED (57)
20	2006	Tanahashi	41	M	3 R	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	RHT	NED (45)
21	2006	Papi [14]	70	F	1,5 R	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	TT	NED (6)
22	2007	Papi [15]	45	M	5 L	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	TT	NED (6)
23	2008	Santeusiano [16]	61	M	3,5 R	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	ST	NED (60)
24	2008	Santeusiano	42	F	4,7 R	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	RHT	NED (84)
25	2009	Farrag [17]	51	M	7 L	ND	NA	NA	Yes	NA	LHT	NA
26	2010	Ning [18]	76	F	4 R	Altas	Yes	NA	Yes	Intermediate	RHT	R/M
27	2010	Larsen [19]	58	M	8 IT	Escasa	No	NA	Yes	Low	HT	NA
28	2010	Cox [20]	69	F	2.2	s	NA	NA	Yes	NA	NA	NA
29	2011	Song [21]	37	M	4 I	<1	No	NA	Yes	Low	ST	NED (12)
30	2011	Verdi [22]	47	F	5.2 I	ND	No	NA	Yes	NA	LHT	NED (9)
31	2011	Verdi	59	M	7 D	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	RHT	NED(31)
32	2013	Lin [23]	88	F	9 IT	<1	Yes	NA	Yes	Low	ST	NED (36)
33	2013	Oya Topaloglu [24]	68	M	8.5 I	NA	NA	NA	Yes	NA	Tumorectomy	NED (9)
34	2013	Mizuuchi [25]	78	M	3D	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	ST	NED (12)
35	2013	Alves Filho [26]	60	F	13.8D	6	No	NA	No	Intermediate	ST	NA
36	2013	Vaziri M. [27]	74	M	12 IT	Sparse	No	NA	Yes	Low	TT	NED (24)
37	2014	Boonlorm [28]	61	F	10.5 L	0	No	NA	NA	Low	ST	NED (19)
38	2019	Ghasemi-rad [29]	41	F	11 L	4	No	Yes	Yes	Intermediate	TT	NED (10)
39	2019	Thompson [30]	44	F	7 NA	NA	NA	Yes	NA	NA	HT	NED (41)
40	2019	Thompson	45	F	8.2	NA	NA	Yes	NA	NA	HT	NED (28)
41	2019	Thompson	52	M	NA	NA	NA	Yes	NA	NA	HT	NED (5)
42	2019	Suh [31]	59	M	5.5 L	0	No	Yes	Yes	Intermediate	HT	NED(17)
43	2021	Mohamed [32]	45	F	5 L	0	No	Yes	Yes	Low	LHT	NED (60)
44	2021	Negura [33]	34	F	5.1 L	0	No	NA	Yes	Low	TT	NED (NA)
45	2022	Zhang [34]	65	F	1 NA	Sparse	No	No	Yes	Low	NA	NA
46	2022	Zhang	72	M	4.3	Sparse	No	Yes	No	Low	NA	NSY (1)
47	2022	Zhang	80	M	NA	Sparse	No	Yes	Yes	Low	NA	NA
48	2023	Jin Zhang [35]	68	M	6.2 L	No	No	Yes	Yes	Low	ST	NED (18)
49	2023	Santoro [36]	66	M	6 L	6	No	Yes	Yes	Intermediate	TT	R / M(17)
50	2023	Santoro	45	F	4.5 L	<1	No	Yes	Yes	Low	TT +LL6D	NED (12)
51	2023	Santoro	61	F	2.8 L	2-Jan	No	Yes	Yes	Low	TT	NED (10)
52	2023	Present	51	M	6 R	0	No	Yes	Yes	Low	RHT	NED (6)

F: Female; M: Male; R: Right Lobe; L: Left Lobe; IT: Intrathoracic; NA: Non Available; NED: No Evidence of Disease; R/M: Recurrence or Metastasis; HT: Hemithyroidectomy; RHT: Right Hemithyroidectomy; LHT: Left Hemithyroidectomy; ST: Subtotal Thyroidectomy; TT: Total Thyroidectomy; NSY: No Surgery Yet; LL6D: Left Level 6 Dissection

\*Risk according to Demicco [2].

## 2. Clinical Case

We present the case of a 51-year-old male, with a history of papillary thyroid cancer in his mother, hypertension and OSAHS. He had a cholecystectomy for symptomatic cholelithiasis and 2 obesity surgeries. The patient presents to his primary care physician with a rapidly expanding cervical tumor that has been developing for 3 months. He has trouble swallowing but else remains same. Following a cervical ultrasound reported that the right thyroid lobe was found to have increased at the expense of a large nodule, predominantly cystic-liquid, with a solid isoechoic periphery. The nodule measures approximately 4 x 5.2 x 5.5 cm in diameter, with poor peripheral Doppler flow, without microcalcifications; TIRADS 2 [38]. A core needle biopsy (CNB) was performed in light of the ultrasonography and clinical findings. The outcome showed mesenchymal proliferation without atypia, characterized by cells with wavy nuclei and inapparent cytoplasm. They are arranged in a spindle-shaped and whorled pattern with predominantly collagenous stroma, in sclerotic areas. The capillaries are elongated, thin-walled, focally "deer antler." No mitosis or necrosis is observed. At one end of the cylinders, thyroid follicles surrounded by proliferation are identified. The immunohistochemistry revealed positive results for CD34 and STAT6. A multidisciplinary committee discussed the case. The decision was made to perform a right hemithyroidectomy, which went off without any issues. The conclusive pathological exam describes a lesion measuring approximately 6 x 5.2 x 4.5 cm. fleshy in appearance and pearly-white in color with areas of pseudomyxoid appearance. The mass is well-defined although it shows irregular borders. Microscopy describes a well-circumscribed, non-encapsulated mesenchymal neoplasm consisting of spindle cells with soft nuclei, without atypia or mitosis. The neoplasm is trapping thyroid follicles at its edge. There are alternating hypercellular and hypocellular zones and a hemangioperitic arrangement/branched vessels in "deer antler." No necrosis is identified. The definitive immunohistochemical study also revealed positive for STAT6 and CD34. It was negative for CKAE1/AE3, Desmin, Actin, S-100, TTF-1, CD31 and spindle cells. A 12-month imaging test follow-up has been carried out thus far with no evidence of recurrence.

## 3. Discussion

First identified in pleura in 1931, SFT has been referred to by a number of names over the years, including submesothelial fibroma, pleural fibroma, benign mesothelioma, and solitary fibrous mesothelioma [37]. SFTs are more common in the fifth to seventh decades of life, although they can occur at any age. There are no recognized risk factors for this kind of tumor, and the prevalence is comparable in both sexes. It is estimated that the head and neck, including the meninges, are the site of origin for 20% of SFTs [39]. The first evidence of this type of thyroid tumors occurred in 1993, with the publication of Taccagni G [3]. The most common clinical presentation is compressive symptoms

due to rapid growth. Paraneoplastic syndrome is exceptional. The diagnosis of these tumors can be suspected by imaging tests. Radiological findings on CT and MRI are similar to those of other soft tissue tumors. However, histological confirmation is needed in all cases. Preoperative diagnostic biopsies have been done in less than half of the instances reported in the literature (n=24), with the majority of these being FNAC as opposed to CNB or trucut (22 vs. 3, since both biopsies were done in 1 case). Only four of these—three FNAB and one CNB produced a conclusive diagnosis before surgery [17,36 and present] (Table 2). Table 2 Goes Here. Of the cases, twelve had spindle cells. Thyroid tissue does not often include spindle cells. They may have arisen initially or as a result of malignant tumors spreading to other areas. When we find these cells in thyroid FNAs, the differential diagnosis varies from absolutely benign lesions like Riedel's thyroiditis, benign nerve system tumors, and post-puncture sclerotic nodules to malignant lesions like medullary thyroid carcinoma, sarcomas, or anaplastic malignancy. For this reason, improving the diagnosis of the many illnesses requires the highest level of accuracy [42]. The gold standard for diagnosing thyroid nodules is fine needle aspiration, which is typically guided by ultrasound [43,44]. The most accepted indications for CNB are when FNAs yield non-diagnostic results or atypia outcomes that are unclearly significant. Although it is possible to perform immunohistochemical techniques with material collected with FNAB, a CNB is more likely to give us the amount of material with sufficient cellularity and information about the capsule that bring us closer to the definitive diagnosis [45]. Likewise, a few recent publications have documented the use of CNB as the initial histological test to be conducted [46,47]. It can be used in the first instance if we suspect malignancy due to its clinical characteristics, such as large size, compressive symptoms or rapid growth. Many studies that support its safety and lack of problems in skilled hands and high-volume centers are currently available in the literature. [48-50]

Although CNB is diagnostic, full resection is required for a complete histopathological evaluation [51]. The tumors may present hemorrhage, necrosis or calcifications, especially in the large ones with high cellularity. Anaplasia or dedifferentiation occurs in less than 1% of SFTs [52] and present poor prognosis, associated with higher recurrence rates. The expression of CD34, Bcl2, CD99, vimentin, and the lack of actin, desmin, s100 protein, as well as epithelial markers such as epithelial membrane antigen (AME), are all included in the conventional immunohistochemistry of SFTs. But these markers are not unique to SFTs, nor are they always present in them. The expression of STAT6, or signal transducer and activator of transcription 6, has been found to be a highly specific (>85%) and sensitive (98%) diagnostic marker [53,54]. As of right now, there are no molecular indicators to identify if a tumor is benign or malignant, or how aggressive it is. Most SFTs have an indolent behavior [55], although, tumor size of more than 10 cm, a

high mitotic rate and the presence of tumor necrosis are risk factors for recurrence and metastasis [39,56,57]. The most used model when predicting the risk of these tumors is the Demicco Model [2]. This is based on a point classification that includes the number of mitoses per field, the patient's age, tumor size and the presence of necrosis. The management of these tumors follows principles of en bloc surgery for other mesenchymal neoplasms and, in fact, is the main basis for the treatment of localized disease [58]. A follow-up strategy for these patients is not supported by research or clinical

recommendations. The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) [59] has post-treatment surveillance guidelines for soft tissue sarcomas, where we can classify these neoplasms. Based on stratified risk, the following follow-up could be carried out:

-Low risk: three years of six-monthly tumor site imaging tests. Afterwards, yearly imaging tests for a follow-up of five years.

-Intermediate-high risk: imaging test every 3-4 months during the first 2 years. Afterwards, every six months for a total of five years of follow-up. After that, a local recurrence is rare.

**Table 2:** Anatomopathologic characteristics of the preoperative biopsy.

Ref.	Preoperative diagnostic test	Preoperative diagnosis	Spindle cells	Suspect of malignancy	STAT6 in preoperative biopsy	CD34 in preoperative biopsy	Other markers in preoperative biopsy
Rodríguez I. [7]	FNAB	No	Yes	NA	NA	NA	NA
Deshmukh NS. [8]	CNB (trucut)	No	Yes	No	NA	NA	NA
Parwani [10]	FNAB	No	Yes	MTC vs benign tumor	NA	NA	NA
Babouk [12]	2 FNAB	No	Yes	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tanahashi [13]	FNAB	No	Yes	No	NA	NA	NA
Tanahashi	FNAB	No	No	B1*	NA	NA	NA
Papi [14]	FNAB	No	No	B1*	NA	NA	NA
Santeusiano	FNAB	No	No	B1*	NA	NA	NA
Farrag [17]	FNAB	Yes	Yes	No	NA	Yes	Negative to AE1/AE3, TTF-1, tiroglobulin, calcitonin, cromogranin, S- 100, smooth muscle actin and CD68
Ning [18]	FNAB	No	Yes	NA	NA	NA	NA
Verdi [22]	2 FNAB	No	No	B1*	NA	NA	NA
Verdi	FNAB	No	No	Colloid stroma vs sclerotic tissue. B1*	NA	NA	NA
Oya Topaloglu [24]	FNAB	No	NA	MTC	NA	NA	NA
Alves Filho [26]	FNAB	No	NA	B2*	NA	NA	NA
Ghasemi- rad [29]	FNAB and	No	No	B1*	NA	NA	NA
Thompson [30]	FNAB	No	Yes	NA	NA	NA	NA
Thompson	FNAB	No	No	B1*	NA	NA	NA
Suh [31]	FNAB	No	No	B2*	NA	NA	NA
Mohamed [32]	2 FNAB	No	No	B2*	NA	NA	NA
Negura [33]	FNAB	No	No	B2*	NA	NA	NA
Santoro [36]	FNAB	Yes	Yes	TIR4**	No	Yes	No
Santoro	FNAB	Yes	Yes	TIR4**	Yes	Yes	No
Santoro	FNAB	No	Yes	TIR3b**	No	No	No
Present	CNB	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

NA: Non Available; FNAB: Fine Needle Aspiration Biopsy; CNB: Core Needle Biopsy; MTC: Medular Thyroid Cancer; STAT6: Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription 6

\*According to Bethesda System [40]

\*\*According to cytology category (Italian SIAPEC-IAP 2014) [41]

#### 4. Conclusions

Thyroid-related SFTs are incredibly rare. Preoperative biopsy is crucial for determining the course of treatment and potential outcome. While FNA can provide definitive results, if the tumor's clinical and radiological features indicate this pathology, it is preferable to undergo CNB or FNA + CNB to finish the preoperative study. Imaging test follow-up appears to be adequate for recurrence control, despite the lack of long-term outcomes.

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