IMAGEM EM NEUROLOGIA/IMAGE IN NEUROLOGY

The Hidden Giant: A Cavernous Malformation within the Brainstem
O Gigante Escondido: Um Cavernoma no Tronco Cerebral

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Case

A 34 year-old woman presented with a one-month history of progressive ataxia, right facial hypoesthesia and hemiparesis. She had no other brainstem signs, namely other cranial nerve involvement or altered consciousness. Brain magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) showed a cavernous angioma in the left side of the pons with a significant surrounding recent bleeding, measuring approximately 30 mm **(Fig. 1)**. The patient under-
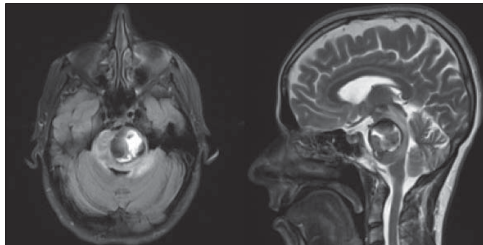

Figure 1. Pre-operative MRI, showing a pontine angioma with extension to the ponto-mesen-cephalic transition (axial image on the left and sagittal on the right)

went surgery through retrosigmoid craniectomy access, approaching the lesion between the fifth and seventh cranial nerves with intra-operatory neurophysiological monitoring. Post-operative MRI confirmed lesion removal **(Fig. 2)**. Twelve months
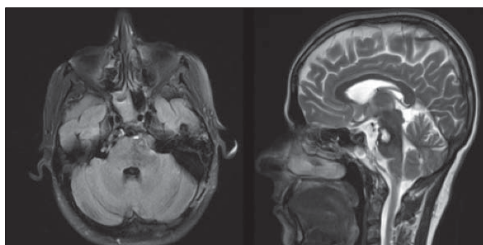

Figure 2. MRI taken two months after surgery (axial image on the left and sagittal on the right)

after surgery, she only referred tongue dysesthesia. With this case, we highlight that despite being a challenging surgery, the extraction of brainstem angiomas remains the curative option for these life-threatening lesions and that a carefully studied surgical approach may lead to excellent clinical and surgical results.[1,2] ■

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