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| **Pathology Question:** |
| What is Non Hodgkins Lymphoma? |
| **Report:** |
| Non-Hodgkin lymphoma is a form of hematologic malignancy that falls under the category of lymphoma. Lymphomas are caused by circulating abnormal lymphocytes proliferating and accumulating in the lymphatic glands, organs and sometimes extra nodular sites. This results clinically in a hard, non tender mass in one or multiple sites within the lymphatic system, typically in the head or neck region. The two main types of lymphoma are Hodgkin Lymphoma and Non-Hodgkin lymphoma, with the latter being by far the more common. The difference between the two is the presence of a specific type of B cell known as the Reed-Sternberger cell in Hodgkin lymphoma which is not present in Non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Non-Hodgkin lymphoma can occur within the lymph nodes and organs or it can have extra nodular manifestations in locations including the oral cavity. It predominately affects older adults, over the age of 55. Non-Hodgkin lymphoma can arise from a variety of different lymphocytes such as B cells, T cells or Natural Killer cells, unlike Hodgkin lymphoma which can only arise from B cells. Non Hodgkin lymphomas are classified according to the type of lymphocyte from which they arise. B cell forms are more common than T cell forms and each presents with its own distinct set of clinical oral manifestations. Non Hodgkin lymphoma can also be further subclassified according to the progression of proliferation. They can either be low grade or high grade, and these classifications have indications for the type of treatment involved with each. Low grade Non-Hodgkin lymphomas are those in which the cells are dividing slowly and they may not require initial treatment. The most common form of low grade Non-Hodgkin lymphoma is follicular lymphoma. Low grade forms do not respond well to chemotherapy treatment. High grade forms are more aggressive as the cells are dividing more rapidly. However, this form of Non-Hodgkin lymphoma responds better to chemotherapy. The most common form of high grade Non-Hodgkin lymphoma is Diffuse Large B Cell Lymphoma. Individuals that have conditions that compromise their immune system such as HIV, as well as those who are infected with certain viruses such as Epstein Barr Virus are at a higher risk for developing Non-Hodgkin lymphoma. |
| **References:** |
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