Successful Treatment of Ulcerated Necrobiosis Lipoidica with Mycophenolate Mofetil

Sir,
Necrobiosis lipoidica is a granulomatous inflammatory disease of the skin usually associated with diabetes mellitus. About a third of patients suffering from necrobiosis lipoidica show painful ulcerations of the involved skin which are usually resistant to therapy. We describe here a case of necrobiosis lipidica where the ulcerations healed after treatment with mycophenolate mofetil (MMF).

CASE REPORT
A non-diabetic 61-year-old women with a 30-year history of necrobiosis lipidica presented with ulcerations of both lower legs that had existed for 18 months. Sharp-bordered, yellow–brown to red painful plaques were observed with ulcerations, atrophy and sclerosis of the centre and elevation of the margin. A biopsy specimen of the lesional skin confirmed the diagnosis and showed collagen degeneration with a concomitant palisading granulomatous infiltration (composed of giant cells, epitheloid cells and histiocytes) in the lower dermis. This granulomatous infiltration was surrounded by a distinct, perivascular inflammatory cell infiltrate featuring plasma cells. We also observed leukocytoclastic vasculitis with obliterated vessels and septal panniculitis. The ulcerated lesions had failed to respond to a number of previous long-term treatment regimens with topical (under occlusion) and oral (60–80 mg per day) corticosteroids, pentoxifylline, dapsone and topical antiseptic substances combined with prolonged compression. The patient also received heparin. Nevertheless, the ulcerations persisted continuously for >18 months and hardly any improvement was noticed (Fig. 1A).

As plasma cells were the most numerous cells in the lesional skin and may therefore play a crucial role in the pathogenesis of necrobiosis lipoidica, we decided to start treatment with lymphocyte-inhibiting MMF (1) at 1 g per day orally divided into 2 doses of 0.5 g. The extensive ulcerations of both lower legs completely regressed within 4 weeks after this therapy was begun (Fig. 1B). The daily dose was subsequently reduced to 0.5 g. After 4 months of treatment the patient was still free of ulcerations. Complete elimination of MMF by the patient resulted in the recurrence of ulcerations within 14 days. The patient refused further therapy with this drug, because she feared the side effects of MMF, although she did not complain of any side effects and we could not observe any during the entire duration of therapy.

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Accepted March 6, 2000.
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DISCUSSION

MMF is used as a potent immunosuppressant for prevention and treatment of renal-transplant rejections (2). However, treatment of bullous pemphigoid (3), psoriasis vulgaris (4) and other diseases with MMF is promising. Here, we provide evidence that MMF may be useful in the management of otherwise therapeutically resistant ulcerated necrobiosis lipoidica.

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Accepted 20 March 2000.

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A Suppurating Fistula from a Cement Foreign Body Presenting as a Tumour of the Nail

Sir,

Nail malignant tumours are not very common and, when diagnosed, tend to cause great alarm amongst patients as well as physicians. The condition is often initially misdiagnosed (1).

CASE REPORT

We report here on a 19-year-old male who complained of a lesion on his right toe. One and a half years earlier there had been some surgical intervention on a bone in that toe. The patient was informed that the surgeon had “cured a cyst” in his bone and put in an osseus graft. During the 3 months prior to his visit he had a recurrence of pain and swelling, with purulent discharge. A colleague described this as a hemorrhagic tumour close to the nail. In addition to a homolateral inguinal adenopathy, the clinical findings led to the differential diagnosis of a pyogenic granuloma or an ulcerated melanoma.

On clinical examination we discovered, adjacent to the proximal nail fold, an emerging round tumour with a clear peripheral and dark central area. There was some purulent and hemorrhagic exudate. This was firm and moderately painful on palpation and was responsible for a slight limp. The nail plate appeared dystrophic (Fig. 1). X-ray showed a homogeneous radiopaque body at the center of the distal