



**VARICELLA PRESENTING AS PENILE ULCER-
A CASE REPORT**

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ABSTRACT

Varicella is a primary viral infection caused by Varicella zoster virus. Humans are the only reservoir of infections and the transmission is from patients with varicella or herpes zoster primarily via droplet infection. It presents with pruritic vesicles and pleomorphic lesions all over the body. The causes of penile lesions are varied and can be due to sexually transmitted diseases or general dermatological diseases. A good history including sexual contact history and clinical examination of the whole body with appropriate investigations should be done to arrive at diagnosis. This case is presented to show that the genital involvement can occur in primary varicella and not all the genital ulcers have to be a sexually transmitted infection.

KEYWORDS : Penile ulcer, Varicella, Genital ulcer

Introduction

Varicella (chicken pox) is caused by Varicella zoster virus. It is recognised by the characteristic vesicular rash often described as “dew drops in rose petal” appearance that starts in a centripetal manner¹. The involvement of genital mucosa is rare in varicella and here we present a case with extensive genital involvement that resolved on treatment with acyclovir.

Case Report

A 21 year old male came with the complaints of genital ulcer of 1 week duration that started as vesicles and progressively increased in size. There was also history of vesicular rash all over the body associated with fever for 1 week. There was no history of sexual contact and no history of previous episodes. On examination, a single large, well defined, painful ulcer of size 8x5 cm with red granulation tissue was present over the dorsum of the shaft of penis extending to the ventral side along with multiple healing erosions all over the body typical of varicella (Figure 1, 2).

Figure 1: Penile ulcer on the ventral side with skin lesions of varicella



Figure 2: Penile ulcer on the dorsal side with skin lesions of varicella



Investigations for genital ulcer disease were done and Tzanck smear was found to be positive with multinucleated epithelial giant cells (Figure 3).

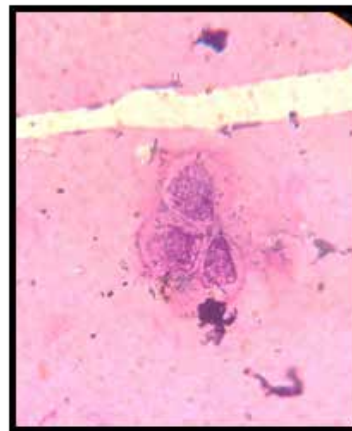


Figure 3: Tzanck smear showing multinucleated giant cells

Other investigations including HIV and VDRL were negative. The patient was started on Acyclovir 800 mg 5 times a day for 10 days and the ulcer fully healed, thus supporting the diagnosis of varicella (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Resolving penile ulcer**Discussion**

Varicella is a primary viral infection caused by Varicella zoster virus. Humans are the only reservoir of infections and the transmission is from patients with varicella or herpes zoster primarily via droplet infection following spread of infective viral particles from skin lesions and also direct contact². The mean incubation period is from 14 days and it presents with pruritic vesicles and pleomorphic lesions in a centripetal distribution all over the body. Lim et al³ has presented an unusual case of varicella involving the penis. Many dermatoses can become manifest in the genital region, some of which are specific for this region and others associated with general dermatological diseases⁴. Some of them are sexually transmitted like herpes genitalis, chancere, chancroid and others due to systemic diseases like papulosquamous diseases or malignancies. A good history including sexual contact history and clinical examination of the whole body with appropriate investigations should be done to arrive at diagnosis. Hence not all lesions on the penis have to be considered sexually transmitted and given a stigma.

Limitations

Viral culture could not be done due to financial constraints.

Conclusion

This case is presented to show that the genital involvement can occur in primary varicella and not all the genital ulcers have to be a sexually transmitted infection.

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