Dystrophic xanthomatosis in primary cutaneous CD30-positive T-cell lymphoma. Report of two cases


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Introduction

The development of xanthomatous changes in primary cutaneous T-cell lymphomas is a rare event. We report two cases of extensive dystrophic xanthomatous changes, developing in regressing lesions of primary cutaneous CD30-positive T-cell lymphoproliferative disorders.

Case 1

An 80-year-old man presented a two-year history of several firm, dome-shaped and non-ulcerated skin nodules, 0.5 to 2-cm in diameter, involving the anterior and lateral aspect of the left leg (fig. 1). A diagnosis of CD30+ CTCL was established based on the histopathology and immunohistochemistry results (fig. 2), and after staging procedures.

A T-cell monoclonal rearrangement was demonstrated by means of PCR analysis. A yellowish atrophic discoloration appeared exactly in the original area after treatment with methotrexate (fig. 3). A biopsy specimen obtained from these yellowish plaques showed a diffuse dermal infiltration composed of histiocytic cells with a large, clear, lipid-laden cytoplasm. No evidence of residual lymphoma was present (fig. 4). Slightly raised cholesterol levels (242 mg/dL; reference range, 160 to 220 mg/dL) and normal values of serum triglycerides were detected. The serum and urine proteinograms were normal.

Discussion

The concept of dystrophic cutaneous xanthoma (DCX) defines the accumulation of lipid-rich macrophages within an area of previously damaged or abnormal skin, both in normolipemic and hyperlipoproteinemic states. Several local factors such as an acute or chronic inflammation, lymphedema, or trauma may be the precipitating stimuli that leads to secondary lipid deposition. Development of dystrophic xanthomatosis in primary cutaneous T-cell lymphoma lesions (mycosis fungoides or primary cutaneous CD30-positive lymphoma) has rarely been reported [1-3]. In such instances, the xanthomatous lesions have usually developed into regressing skin tumours or plaques, after specific treatment[2,5]. As far as we know, no previous reports of xanthomatous changes have been reported in regressing lesions of LyP. Histologically, these lesions are characterized by a diffuse dermal infiltration with lipid-laden macrophages without an evident lymphomatous infiltrate.

The pathogenesis of dystrophic xanthomas in primary cutaneous T-cell lymphoma is uncertain. Cell lipids are probably released from neoplastic cells after local tissue hypermetabolism or damage following therapy, and then, these lipids are processed and engulfed by macrophages. There is a speculation that the destruction of tumoral T-cells may lead to a release of intracytoplasmic cytokines that could directly activate an histiocytic response. In rare instances, malignant T-cells may play a direct role in lipoprotein processing and xanthomatization.

References