ACNE, ROSACEA, AND RELATED DISORDERS (INCLUDING HIDRADENITIS SUPPURATIVA)

OTOPHYMA: ABOUT A CASE

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Background: Phyma, a slowly progressive and disfiguring disorder of the face and ears, is generally considered to be an advanced form of rosacea. Interestingly, it may occur in patients with no other signs or symptoms of rosacea. It is caused by sebaceous gland hyperplasia and hypertrophy with surrounding fibrous tissue proliferation.

Phyma typically affects the nose (rhinophyma); however, equivalent presentations can occur on the chin (gnatophyma), forehead (metophyma), ears (otophyma), and eyelids (blepharophyma).

Although rhinophyma is ubiquitously seen in clinical practice, otophyma (rosaceous lymphedema of the ear) is much more rare and uncommonly reported in the literature. It presents as either unilateral or bilateral edematous ear involvement with or without coexisting facial rosacea.

Observation: A 58-year-old Hispanic man presented for evaluation of a one-month history of asymptomatic enlarged ears. He denied any triggers or history of repeated trauma to the affected area. His past medical history was non-contributory and notably negative for thyroid disease, dermatomyositis, systemic lupus erythematosus, angioedema or sarcoidosis.

Physical examination was notable for bilateral diffuse auricular enlargement with mild-moderate edema and without associated overlying erythema, scale, erosion or induration. No paresthesia or dysesthesia was noted. His facial skin was devoid of any other dermatologic conditions. Importantly, he had no other signs of rosacea.

The differential diagnosis included leprosy, sarcoidosis and malignancy, particularly angiosarcoma.

A punch biopsy of the right ear lobule was notable for a superficial perivascular and perifollicular lymphoplasmacytic infiltrate and papillary dermal edema, consistent with rosacea. PAS stain was negative for fungal organisms. No demodex mites were seen in the follicles. No granulomatous inflammation was present.

After clinicopathological correlation, a diagnosis of otophyma was made.

Key message: Otophyma is a very rare subtype of phyma that is rarely reported in the literature. We present this case given the rarity and to increase awareness.