



INFECTIOUS DISEASES (BACTERIAL, FUNGAL, VIRAL, PARASITIC, INFESTATIONS)

LEPROSY - CAN WE JUDGE SPECTRUM OF DISEASE BY CLINICAL PRESENTATION????

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Background: Leprosy is a slowly progressive infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium leprae* primarily affecting the skin and nerves. In high bacillary load it may affect internal organ also. Diagnosis and classification of leprosy have been based primarily on the clinical features, especially in resource poor situations where biopsy facilities are not available.

Observation: A 17 year old male patient was presented with a 3 year history of asymptomatic solitary hypopigmented macule over the left forearm (6 X 4 cm). In last year he developed erythematous ichthyotic plaques over the bilateral forearm, left thigh and left ankle (size varies from 2 X 2 cm to 6 X 4 cm). Hair over the lesions were decreased. Touch, Pain and Temperature sensation over the lesion were lost. Ulnar nerve, radial cutaneous nerve and ulnar cutaneous nerves were bilaterally thickened and non-tender. Motor and sensory examination of the extremities were unremarkable. Thus clinically patient was diagnosed as Borderline Tuberculoid spectrum of Leprosy. Slit Skin Smear (SSS) showed a bacterial Index- 3+ and morphological Index- 1%. Histopathological examination shows features of Borderline Lepromatous spectrum of leprosy. Thus investigations were suggest Borderline Lepromatous spectrum of Leprosy.

Even though the clinical presentation was suggestive of Borderline Tuberculoid spectrum, the SSS and biopsy showed features of borderline Lepromatous spectrum. Paucibacillary spectrum are treated with 2 drug MDT for 6 months and multibacillary with 3 drug MB-MBT for 1 year. It is thus imperative to properly diagnose the spectrum, lest patient is under treated leading to relapse, resistance and spread of infection

Key message: A proper classification of the spectrum is essential for appropriate treatment, A clinico-pathological diagnosis with Slit Skin Smear is required to confirm the spectrum of leprosy and initiate appropriate treatment.

