



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

## NECROTIZING FASCIITIS – A RARE BUT LIFE THREATENING COMPLICATION OF VARICELLA ZOSTER VIRUS (VZV) INFECTION IN CHILDREN.

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Necrotizing fasciitis (NF) is a severe life-threatening soft tissue infection characterized by rapidly spreading necrosis of the fascia and the subcutaneous tissue. Its incidence owing to invasive *Streptococcus pyogenes* has significantly increased in children recently, especially in immunocompetent children. The incidence of NF in the UK is approximately 500 new cases each year. NF is a rare complication of chicken pox that has high morbidity and mortality. The single most essential variable influencing mortality is time to surgical debridement. Therefore prompt diagnosis and aggressive treatment is the key. Treatment includes aggressive broad-spectrum antibiotic therapy and urgent surgical debridement of the affected tissues.

We present a 10-year old boy who was admitted with a vesicular eruption in keeping with chicken pox who on further examination had an erythematous indurated rash with crepitation felt on palpation over the upper torso. CT neck and thorax demonstrated extensive fasciomyositis of the chest wall muscles.

He underwent explorative surgery which yielded turbid fluid but no evidence of necrosis. Gram positive cocci with Group A *Streptococcus* was cultured both on wound fluid and peripheral blood culture.

The clinical presentation along with radiographic and culture results were supportive of NF. Treatment included intensive monitoring and resuscitation with ventilation, intravenous (IV) fluids and inotropes. Administration of IV Benzylpenicillin and Aciclovir resulted in complete recovery.

Our case highlights the need for accurate diagnosis and prompt management of a rare life threatening complication of VZV infection in children.

