



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

## THE GREAT MIMICKER: A CASE OF A 66-YEAR OLD FEMALE WITH LEPROMATOUS LEPROSY

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**Background:** Leprosy or Hansen's disease is a chronic granulomatous infection caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*, commonly affecting the peripheral nerves and skin. There are pockets of leprosy that still persist in Southeast Asia, and the western Pacific, including the Philippines and Indonesia.

**Observation:** A 66-year-old female, from the Philippines, reported to the outpatient clinic with a 5-year history of enlarging erythematous plaques and nodules on the face and over her extremities with sparing of the trunk. There was no fever, weight loss, weakness, and lymphadenopathy. There was no history of penetrating trauma or insect bite on the affected areas. Unremarkable past medical, family history as well as social history.

On physical examination, patient presented with erythematous infiltrated nodules and plaques on her face, upper and lower extremities topped with dry scales. There was no sensory loss or peripheral nerve enlargement during the time of examination. Histopathology from a biopsy of her right cheek and right arm was positive for dense diffuse dermal foamy lymphohistiocytic infiltrate containing numerous globi filled with acid-fast organisms were seen on Fite Faraco stain. A diagnosis of Lepromatous leprosy was made and patient was started on a multidrug regimen of Rifampin 300mg, Dapsone 100mg and Clofazimine 50mg for a planned treatment course of at least 24 months. Three weeks into treatment, patient responded well with significant improvement of the lesions.

**Key message:** Advanced cases of Leprosy is characterized by symmetric skin lesions including nodules and plaques, with frequent involvement of the nasal mucosa. The present case had symptoms representing an early lepromatous form of the disease. Although leprosy may present a spectrum, this case highlights the need to keep leprosy in the differential diagnosis for patients with plaques and nodules as it is called a great mimicker, and particularly in regions where leprosy is endemic.

