



INFLAMMATORY SKIN DISEASES (OTHER THAN ATOPIC DERMATITIS & PSORIASIS)

PYODERMA GANGRENOSUM OF THE LEG: PATHERGIC RESPONSE TO HERPES ZOSTER INFECTION

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Background: An 82 years old male patient presented with a three months history of persistent painful lesions of the oral cavity, face and trunk. Examination of the hard palate showed one raised and partially ulcerated lesion. The upper lip and the abdomen presented with pustular erythematous plaques. Biopsies suggested pyostomatitis vegetans and pyoderma gangrenosum (PG) respectively. Patient was commenced on ciclosporin and prednisolone with improvement. Two weeks later, patient reported a new rapidly spreading rash on the left leg.

Observation: Examination revealed a vesicular rash on a background of erythematous skin with multiple erosions, pustules and skin necrosis, affecting the left L5 dermatome. Biopsy revealed ballooning degeneration suggesting a breakthrough of herpes zoster infection. Aciclovir was added to the patient's drug regimen with a complete resolution of the skin manifestations in six weeks.

Key message: In this case we suspected a pathergic response of PG triggered by the concomitant shingles. Literature reports only one previous case of PG of the scalp elicited by shingles. PG exhibits pathergy to other concomitant skin diseases and this case acted as a useful reminder.

