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MELANOMA AND MELANOCYTIC NAEVI

IMPORTANCE OF EXCISIONAL BIOPSY IN THE STAGING AND TREATMENT OF LENTIGO MALIGNA

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Introduction: Lentigo maligna (LM) is an in situ variant of melanoma in chronically sunexposed skin associated with high surgical morbidity. Incisional biopsies can potentially lead to sampling errors where a nidus of invasion might be missed. There are various reports in the literature on the incidence of the upstaging of LM to lentigo maligna melanoma when the LM was initially diagnosed with an incisional biopsy, and invasion was detected at tche time of surgical excision.

Objective: 1. To quantify the incidence of LM upstaging with excisional biopsies in cases originally diagnosed by incisional biopsy. 2. Surgical strategies to reduce final defect size in facial LM.

Materials and Methods: A total of 117 facial LM lesions were removed by excisional biopsy without margins and closed with purse-string sutures. Cases with invasion underwent staged excision with 10 mm margins. Most of the cases without invasion were treated with neoadjuvant topical imiquimod 5% cream (5 days/week x 8 weeks) followed by conservative staged excision with 2 mm margins using radial sections and staining with hematoxylin and eosin and immunostaining with Mart-1, with or without SOX10.

Results: Invasion was detected in 25% of the excisional biopsy specimens. The average depth was 0.48 mm (range 0.17-3 mm, median 0.4 mm). Eighty-three patients completed topical neoadjuvant imiquimod 5% cream for two months prior to staged excisions with 2 mm margins. All patients had negative margins with the first Mohs stage.

Conclusions: We advocate making every effort to correctly stage LM prior to definitive surgical treatment. Excisional biopsy with temporary purse-string closure enables accurate tumor staging and contracts the tumor footprint to its minimal size. Neoadjuvant topical imiquimod 5% cream followed by a conservative staged excision with 2 mm margins allows the removal of the LM with relatively minimal surgical morbidity.





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