



SKIN MANIFESTATIONS OF INTERNAL DISEASE

CARCINOMA EN CUIRASSE WITH VESICULAR ERUPTIONS: A PITFALL IN DIAGNOSIS BY TZANCK SMEAR

Yin-shuo Chang⁽¹⁾ - Kuo-hsien Wang⁽¹⁾ - Hsiou-hsin Tsai⁽¹⁾ - Ting-hua Yang⁽¹⁾

Department Of Dermatology, Taipei Medical University Hospital, Taipei City, Taiwan⁽¹⁾

Background: Breast cancer is the most common malignancy to metastasize to the skin in women. Cutaneous metastases of breast cancer with vesicles may sometimes be mistaken for herpes zoster or herpes simplex infection.

Observation: We report a case of carcinoma en cuirasse with vesicular eruptions which was first misdiagnosed as herpes infection. The clinical unilateral vesicles and erosions combined with multinuclear giant cell-like clusters formed by atypical tumor cells under Tzanck smear may mislead the clinician to the diagnosis of herpetic infection and delay the diagnosis of malignancy. These may be the pitfall in diagnosis of cutaneous metastases of breast cancer with vesicular eruptions by Tzanck smear. In patients with vesicular lesions and underlying neoplasm, clinician should always put tumoral skin involvement into differential diagnosis.

Key messages: Carcinoma en cuirasse with vesicular eruptions combined with multinuclear giant cell-like cytology under Tzanck smear may be misleading for herpes zoster or herpes simplex infection. The pitfall should be stressed in the diagnosis of vesicular lesions, especially in breast cancer patients.

