



SKIN MANIFESTATIONS OF INTERNAL DISEASE

SKIN HYPERPIGMENTATION AS A FIRST SIGN OF PRIMARY BILIARY CHOLANGITIS

R Tawba⁽¹⁾ - A Fakih⁽²⁾ - N Hajjar⁽²⁾ - F El Sayed⁽³⁾

Lebanese University / Baabda Governmental University Hospital Lebanese, Dermatology, Beirut, Lebanon⁽¹⁾ - *Lebanese University / Baabda Governmental University Hospital, Dermatology, Beirut, Lebanon*⁽²⁾ - *Lebanese University / Baabda Governmental University Hospital, Dermatology, Beirut, Lebanon*⁽³⁾

Background: Both acute and chronic liver disease can have skin manifestations ranging from palmar erythema to more obvious findings such as jaundice. Primary biliary cholangitis (PBC) represents a chronic, autoimmune, insidious, cholestatic liver disease, usually affecting middle-aged women and may result in liver failure and cirrhosis. Approximately 56% of patients are asymptomatic at baseline visit. Pruritus and fatigue are most commonly reported in symptomatic patients (26 and 12%, respectively). Dermatologic complaint is the presenting sign or symptom in 33% of cases. With the progression of the disease, other skin manifestations are reported in 60% of cases. Skin hyperpigmentation, due to melanin deposition, is seen in 25-50% of newly diagnosed patients. The interesting part of our case is the onset of skin hyperpigmentation many years before the appearance of the liver symptoms. No previous similar cases were reported.

Observation: A 40-year-old woman presented for generalized pruritus and fatigue, physical examination showed diffuse macular hyperpigmentation sparing palms, soles and mucous membranes. The hyperpigmentation appeared 13 years ago. Skin biopsy at that time showed isolated hyperpigmentation. Laboratory workup was significant for high alkaline phosphatase level: 542 (30-100 international units). Liver biopsy was consistent with cirrhosis and workup for auto-immune liver disease showed positive for antimitochondrial antibodies (AMA) implementing the diagnosis of PBC. A new skin biopsy showed non specific dermal hyperpigmentation. The patient was transferred to gastroenterology department.

Key message: according to our case, acquired hyperpigmentation may lead to early diagnosis of primary biliary cholangitis and so added to the early signs of the disease.

