VASCULAR DISEASE, VASCULITIS

# KOEBNER PHENOMENON IN SMALL VESSEL CUTANEOUS VASCULITIS. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

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The isomorphic reaction or Koebner phenomenon (KP) refers to the development of dermatologic lesions in otherwise healthy-appearing skin at sites of cutaneous injury. Firstly described in a patient with psoriasis, it was subsequently reported to occur in other dermatologic disorders, mainly lichen planus and

In the last 20 years, 155 patients with small vessel cutaneous vasculitis (SVCV), have been studied for the presence of isomorphic lesions in cutaneous areas of mechanical trauma, scar sites or previously inflamed areas. The clinical aspects of SVCV mainly consisted of palpable purpura variably associated with other manifestations (bullous, necrotic and pomphus-like lesions). Histologically, a leukocytoclastic vasculitis with fibrinoid necrosis, diffuse infiltration of neutrophils and nuclear dust in dermal vessels wall was detected in all the patients. They performed an immunological, viral and microbiological screening and direct immunofluorescence on the affected skin.

13 patients presented trauma-related isomorphic lesions in areas of pressure (rubber bands, watch) or of scratching. The histological examination of these lesions disclosed a leukocytoclastic vasculitis.

3 young patients had IgA vasculitis (Schonlein-Henoch disease) and 1 had adult IgA vasculitis, 8 patients had HCV-related vasculitis with mixed cryoglobulinemia and 1 patient had drug-induced vasculitis.

Our findings of KP during SVCV suggest to perform all the investigation in order to exclude IgA vasculitis and HCV-related vasculitis. In the latter 2 conditions the small cutaneous vessels are likely to undergo pathogenetic processes that are at the base of SVCV, after minor trauma.