



INFLAMMATORY SKIN DISEASES (OTHER THAN ATOPIC DERMATITIS & PSORIASIS)

DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA OF PYODERMA GANGRENOSUM IN MAJOR NON- DERMATOLOGY TEXTBOOKS

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Background: Pyoderma gangrenosum (PG) is a chronic, ulcerative neutrophilic dermatosis which presents a diagnostic challenge, with a reported misdiagnosis rate around 15%. The initial assessment of PG patients is commonly performed by non-dermatologists, and the appropriate recognition of PG is paramount for positive outcomes. Thus, we reviewed the diagnosis of PG and its main differential diagnoses listed in major non-dermatological textbooks of medical specialties that PG patients often encounter first, and compared them to the main dermatological textbooks to assess for potential gaps of knowledge.

Observation: We reviewed four textbooks of general surgery, plastic surgery, trauma surgery, vascular surgery, emergency medicine, and dermatology respectively. In non-dermatology textbooks, PG was most commonly mentioned in chapters that discussed wound healing, skin and soft tissue, inflammatory intestinal diseases, and dermatologic presentations; however, 10 out of the 20 non-dermatology textbooks did not list PG anywhere. A differential diagnosis for PG was listed in only two of the non-dermatology textbooks and included vasculitis, bacterial or fungal infection, neuropathic or vascular ulceration, or spider bites. PG was listed in all of the dermatology textbooks, each time with extensive lists of differential diagnoses. Finally, none of the non-dermatology textbooks indicated PG in the differential diagnosis for necrotizing fasciitis (NF), while two of the dermatology books included PG in the NF differential diagnosis.

Key message: There is an evident omission in the main textbooks of surgery and emergency medicine when addressing PG and its differential diagnosis. Moreover, PG was not even considered in the differential diagnosis of NF in non-dermatology textbooks. This might be an additional contributory factor to the issue of PG misdiagnosis. Comprehensive descriptions of PG and common PG mimickers should be included in non-dermatologic textbooks to address this omission in the training of other specialties who often are the initial providers for patients with PG.

