

BASAL CELL CARCINOMA IN A LONGSTANDING CASE OF LUPUS VULGARIS

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A Case of a 57-year-old male patient with a longstanding lupus vulgaris developing basal cell carcinoma is reported.

Key Words : Lupus vulgaris, Basal cell carcinoma

Introduction

Basal cell carcinoma (BCC) is a malignant epithelial tumour of the skin that arises from basal cells of the epidermis and its appendages. Different types of malignant changes may occur as a complication in a longstanding case of lupus vulgaris (LV), of which squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) is commoner¹ but BCC is rarely reported.

Care Report

A 57-year-old male patient presented with a superficial spreading plaque with thread-like margins on the left malar region. Ulceration, crusting and scarring were seen at places. The lesion had been present for the



Fig. 1. Basal cell carcinoma in a longstanding lesion of lupus vulgaris.

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past 8 to 10 years. The patient was an indoor worker with no history of exposure to occupational carcinogens, ionising radiation, burns, etc. A biopsy had been taken from the lesion 4 years back which showed features characteristic of LV. Routine haemogram and Mantoux test were also in favour of tubercular infection. The patient had been given antitubercular drugs (rifampicin, INH, ethambutol) but he had stopped treatment midway. Treatment had been started again 1 year back with the same drugs but no response was seen, instead the plaque was seen to increase in size. A repeat biopsy was done and this time histopathology examination revealed a thinned and ulcerated epidermis with nests of atypical cells arranged in a palisading fashion typical of BCC. The patient was then referred to the oncologist for further management.

Discussion

Various factors like a fair complexion, prolonged exposure to sunlight, radiation and chemical carcinogens have been implicated in the aetiopathogenesis of BCC.² Although prolonged exposure to sunlight in white-shinned people is the commonest cause of BCC it is rarely seen in dark-skinned individuals.³ BCC is less commonly seen in cases of longstanding LV.⁴ In our case the patient developed BCC in a longstanding lesion of LV. Chronic non-healing ulceration may be the aetiological factor.

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