WHAT IS YOUR DIAGNOSIS?

19 year old male patient was admitted with a h/o hyperpigmentation of palms and soles of 2 years' duration. He was born with a dark complexion and has the darkest complexion among all the rest of the family members. He had noticed pigmentation in the oral mucosa from early childhood. He works with machines in a leather factory. There was no family history suggestive of diabetes mellitus or photosensitivity.

Examination revealed a well built teenager who was dark complexioned. There was no pallor of the mucosa. Palms and soles were pigmented in a diffuse manner. Fig. 1. The face and exposed parts of the upper extremities also showed hyperpigmentation. Fig. 3. There was diffuse pigmentation on the mucous membrane of cheeks on the dorsum and under surface of the tongue Fig. 2 as well as on the palate. Routine clinical examination revealed no abnormalities.

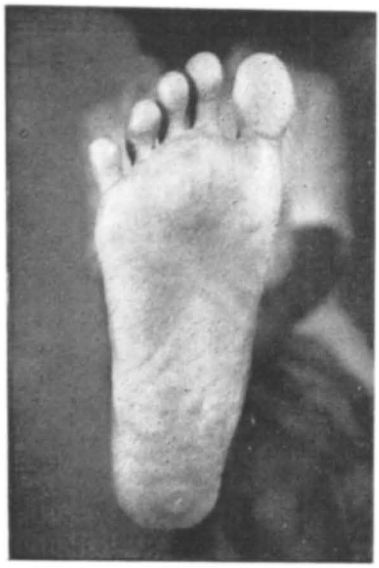

Fig. 1

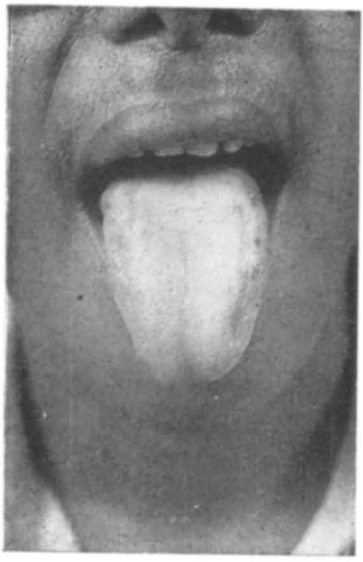

Fig. 2

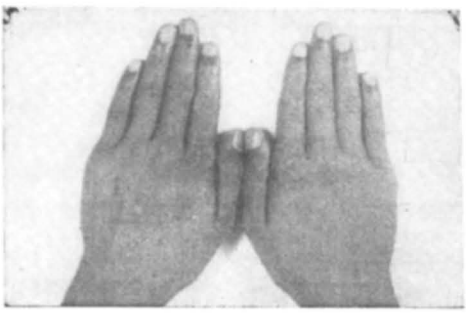

Fig. 3

Differential diagnosis : 1. Porphyria cutanea tarda
2. Fanconi's aneamia
3. Hemochromatosis
4. Megaloblastic anemia

Final diagnosis : Megaloblastic anemia

Other than routine investigations like Hb, Blood picture, WBC T & D and ESR, the following tests were carried out. G.T.T., skin biopsy, liver biopsy, L.E. cells, prophyrins, bone marrow studies and plasma cortisole levels. The hemoglobin level was 11.7 Gm%. Blood picture showed macrocytosis and hypersegmented polymorphs. Bone marrow showed some megaloblastic changes. Patient was then submitted to tests for malabsorption. These revealed malabsorptive state. Vit. B_{12} estimation in the serum revealed low values. Patient was treated with Inj. Vit. B_{12} 1μg. I.M.O.D. for 10 days which was followed by once a week Inj. of Vit. B_{12}. There was a significant change in the pigmentation within one week of therapy. Patient continues with his treatment and is being followed up.

Megaloblastic anemia presenting as pigmentation of the palms and soles has been reported in the literature. It is an uncommon presentation and yet one which should give a clue to the diagnosis.