

WHAT IS YOUR DIAGNOSIS ?

Forty-four year old male patient presented with the complaint of recurrent itchy eruptions on the body since 4 years.

Patient's skin problems had started 4 years before as itching all over the body followed by vesicular and pustular eruption in the axillae and trunk. These lesions gradually spread to involve the whole body and scalp and later became dry and scaly. Initial lesions subsided within a month after its onset with some local applications and patient was symptom-free for several months. Subsequently lesions used to recur two or three times a year with worsening during summer months.



Examination revealed multiple hyperpigmented dry scaly patches all over the body and scalp. Vesicular and pustular lesions were seen on axillae and trunk. Mucous membranes were uninvolved.

A biopsy from one of the vesicular lesions showed a bulla at the level of the granular layer with evidence of acantholysis.

Differential diagnosis :

1. Sub corneal pustular dermatosis
2. Dermatitis herpetiformis
3. Pemphigus foliaceus

Final diagnosis : Pemphigus foliaceus

This patient presented with a recurrent and pruritic vesiculo bullous eruption on the body which used to worsen in summer. Although a diagnosis of sub-corneal pustular dermatosis or dermatitis herpetiformis could be considered, the presence of an intra epidermal acantholytic bulla rules out these clinically. There was no grouping of the lesions as in dermatitis herpetiformis and histologically the bullous cavity was devoid of neutrophils.

In spite of histological evidence of pemphigus foliaceus, the course of the disease suggested a relative benign condition. On the strength of the clinical features, dapsone was given at a dose of 100 mg per day, with prompt symptomatic relief and rapid resolution of lesions. Since then exacerbations and remissions occurred, the latter always promptly with dapsone. All three follow up biopsies during exacerbations brought on owing to self withdrawal of drug by the patient showed again features of pemphigus foliaceus.

Pemphigus responding to dapsone has been reported by various workers. This case which had histological features of pemphigus foliaceus only, seems to be one such case.

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—*Managing Editor*