AUTO - ERYTHROCYTE SENSITIZATION

(Case Report)

O. P. SINGH * AND SURESH PANJWANI †

Summary

Two cases of auto-erythrocyte sensitization, which is a rare clinical entity, are reported.

Auto-erythrocyte sensitization (Syn. Devil's pinch, Painful-bruising syndrome) which is believed to be the result of autosensitization to extravasated red blood cells, is characterised by recurrent painful erythematous and purpuric lesions on thighs and elsewhere. The disease occurs most frequently in young adult and middle aged females, who are often psychiatrically abnormal1. Thus, it has been rightly remarked by Ratnoff and Agle² that autosensitivity to erythrocyte stroma may be a psychosomatic disorder. Generalised abdominal complaints associated with nausea, vomiting and syncopal attacks occur and gastrointestinal and intracranial bleeding have been reported3. Diagnosis of auto-erythrocyte sensitization may be confirmed by intradermal injections of red blood cells or their washed stroma1.

Case Reports

Case 1: A 32 year-old married woman presented with recurrent painful eighteenatous and bluish macules on thighs and forearms for ten years. She had been getting such lesions

own blood gave positive result. Case 2: A 21 year-old unmarried lady presented in O P D with history of recurrent erythematous and bluish macules on thighs, legs and forearms (Fig. 1) for four years which would appear spontaneously and disappear in 10-15 days. The patient started getting lesions 2 months after her father expired. She had such episodes about 4-5 times and they were often associated with depression and increased mental tension. On examination she had erythematous and bluish echymotic

spontaneously every 2-4 months and

these lesions used to subside in 3-5

passing black coloured stools twice in

the past one year. She had an introvert

tense personality and had been getting

occasional hysterical attacks for about

two years prior to her hospital visit.

She also had pruritus vulvae and neuro-

ation she had bluish echymotic lesions

on both thighs, buttocks and the left

forearm. Intradermal test with patient's

dermatitis for ten years.

The patient also gave history of

On examin-

Department of Dermatology & Venereology All India Institute of Medical Sciences
New Delhi,
Received for publication on 30—6—1979

negative.

Discussion

right forearm.

Auto-erythrocyte sensitization is said to be a distinctive and rare clinical

lesions on both thighs, right knee and

with patient's own blood was, however,

The intradermal test

^{*} Lecturer

[†] Junior Resident

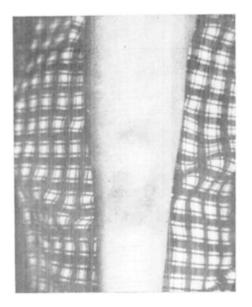


Fig. 1. Echymotic lesions on the flexor aspect of right forearm.

entity¹. Both the cases reported belonged to the age group described, viz., young, adult and middle aged females. Both of them presented recurrent painful echymotic lesions occuring in hysterical individuals. Only one case gave history of gastrointestinal bleeding (malena) which has been reported to occur occasionally in these cases. One of the two cases also had neurodermatitis, again highlighting the fact that the disease may be basically a psychosomatic disorder. In one case the severity

of the condition was related to the degree of emotional stress. The intradermal test with patient's own red blood cells was positive only in one case.

The management of this condition is a problem because these cases are resistant to psychotherapy and no significant response is seen with corticosteroids³.

References

- Champion RH: Purpura, Text Book of Dermatology, 2nd Ed, Edited by Rook Arthur, Wilkinson DS and Ebling FJG, Blackwell Scientific Publications, Great Britain, 1972 p 918.
- Ratnoff OD and Agle DP: A re-evaluation of the syndrome of auto-erythrocyte sensitization, Medicine (Balt), 47: 475, 1968.
- Moschella Samuel L: Diseases of the peripheral vessels and their contents, Edited by Moschella Samuel L, Pillsbury Donald M and Hurley Harry J, WB Saunders Company, USA, 1975, p 864.
- Gardner FH and Diamond LK: Autoerythrocyte sensitization, Blood, 10:675, 1955.
- Hersle K and Mobacken H: Autoerythrocyte sensitization syndrome (Painful bruising syndrome), Brit J Derm, 81:574, 1969.