Blaschko-linear angioma serpiginosum

Sir,

Angioma serpiginosum is a rare, benign, nevoid vascular anomaly characterized by multiple, minute, bright red, grouped angiomatous spots arranged in linear arrays, small rings or serpiginous patterns.

A 19-year-old woman presented with asymptomatic reddish eruptions on the right upper limb for 6 years. The eruption started on the right arm and gradually progressed downward in a linear fashion to involve the right forearm as well. There was no history of trauma, contact allergy or bleeding from any site. Past history and family history were non-contributory.

Examination revealed multiple minute brightly erythematous grouped macules and irregular patches arranged in a serpiginous pattern extending from the right arm to right mid-forearm in a Blaschkoid distribution [Figures 1a and b, 2a-d]. Lesions were non-blanchable on diascopy [Figure 3a]. Mucocutaneous and systemic examination was unremarkable. Ophthalmological examination did not reveal any abnormality.

Laboratory investigations including complete hemogram and serum biochemistry profiles were within normal limits. On dermoscopy, multiple well-demarcated red lagoons were found [Figure 3b and c]. Skin biopsy from the erythematous macules showed dilated capillaries in the dermal papillae and upper dermis. No inflammatory infiltrate or extravasation of red cells was observed [Figure 4a and b].

Based on the clinical features, diascopy, dermoscopy and histopathological findings, a diagnosis of angioma serpiginosum was made. The patient was counseled regarding the benign nature of the condition and was advised pulse-dye laser therapy as she was cosmetically concerned.

Angioma serpiginosum was first described by Hutchinson in 1889 and was named by Crocker in 1894.[1] Clinically, lesions of angioma serpiginosum are characterized by multiple, minute copper-colored to bright red angiomatous puncta occurring in small clusters and sheets. The arrangement and extension of the lesions may produce a serpiginous pattern.

Although it affects both sexes at all ages, 90% occur in girls under the age of 16. Predominant sites of involvement are the lower extremities and buttocks though atypical sites such as breast and soles may
Histopathology reveals dilated, thin-walled capillaries in some of the dermal papillae and the upper dermis. Epidermal changes and extravasation of red blood cells do not occur.

Differential diagnoses considered in our case were unilateral nevoid telangiectasia, pigmented purpuric dermatoses and port-wine stain. Unilateral nevoid telangiectasia presents as fine, thread-like telangiectatic lesions in a derматomal distribution, usually involving unilateral C3 and C4 dermatomes and is completely blanchable [Table 1]. Pigmented purpuric eruptions, particularly Majocchi’s variant (purpura annularis telangiectoides) are more likely to be bilateral and show lymphocytes and extravasated erythrocytes on histopathological examination. Port-wine stain is generally found unilaterally on the face and neck and is mostly localized in the distribution of the trigeminal nerve.
Letters to the Editor

Table 1: Differences between angioma serpiginosum and unilateral nevoid telangiectasia

| Features          | Angioma serpiginosum                  | Unilateral nevoid telangiectasia |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Age of onset      | Appears before puberty               | Congenital or acquired           |
| Gender            | Almost exclusively women             | Male: Female=1:2                 |
| Site              | Mostly extremities lower > upper     | Trigeminal or C3-C4 dermatome    |
| Lesions           | Multiple, minute copper-colored to bright red angiomatic puncta in small clusters and sheets often in a serpiginous pattern | Fine, thread-like telangiectasia |
| Diascopy          | Incomplete blanching                 | Completely blanchable            |
| Dermoscopy        | Numerous small, relatively well-demarcated, round to oval red lagoons | Thin and tortuous linear vessels. |
| Biopsy            | Dilated, thin-walled capillaries in the dermal papillae and the upper dermis | Dilated capillaries in the upper and mid-dermis |

Angioma serpiginosum is slowly progressive and chronic. Spontaneous involution may occur but is never complete. Treatment with a pulsed dye laser may improve or eliminate such lesions. Early diagnosis of angioma serpiginosum may avoid unnecessary hematological work-up as the condition simulates purpura.

Linear or Blaschko-linear angioma serpiginosum appears to be a rare condition and we were able to find only a few previously published reports. [9-12]

Financial support and sponsorship
Nil.

Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

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How to cite this article: Das D, Nayak CS, Tambe SA. Blaschko-linear angioma serpiginosum. Indian J Dermatol Venereol Leprol 2016;82:335-7.

Received: May, 2015. Accepted: October, 2015.