

URTICARIA MULTIFORME PRESENTING IN AN ADULT MALE

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Background

- Urticaria multiforme (UM) is a subtype of acute urticaria
- Typically in children 4 months to 4 years (1)
- Associations: dermatographism, edema, pruritus
- Common triggers: infection, immunizations, and medications (2)
- Duration of each lesion typically <24 hours
- Self-limited condition that responds to anti-histamines within 48 hours

Case presentation

- 73-year old M with PMHX of herpes-simplex virus 1 presented with a 4-day history of swelling of his bilateral hands and a pruritic rash that
- Rash began on scalp and became diffuse.
- Reported recent history of close contact with grandchild with viral illness
- Physical exam: trunk, scalp, extremities, genitalia, and buttocks with several red annular plaques, some coalescing into larger plaques. No mucosal or ocular involvement
- Differential diagnosis: erythema multiforme minor vs. UM
- Punch biopsy results: urticarial reaction, without features consistent with erythema multiforme
- Negative for active mycoplasma infection
- Treated in one week with a oral prednisone taper, triamcinolone 0.1% cream, and cetirizine

Figures 1 – 4

Erythematous coalescing annular plaques with dusky centers and with some satellite lesions



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

Discussion

- Although atypical in adult, acute onset and rapid rate of resolution clinically consistent with UM over urticarial vasculitis vs. EM
- No residual hyperpigmentation or bruising, which is typically seen in urticarial vasculitis
- Urticarial vasculitis also much more common in women, so less likely here
- Symptoms of acral swelling and pruritus consistent with UM
- Given his age, urticarial phase bullous pemphigoid was also considered, but with acute onset and largely no symptoms, this was significantly less likely
- Etiology was likely subclinical viral infection given recent exposure to grandchild with recent viral illness

Conclusions

- UM is frequently mistaken for other annular rashes, such as erythema multiforme or a serum-sickness like reaction
- The significance of this case is to contribute to the growing literature on UM, a commonly missed diagnosis
- As UM most commonly occurs in children, this case highlights a very rare and atypical case of an adult presentation

References

- 1) Sharma, Reena K, and Mudita Gupta. "Urticaria Multiforme: A Commonly Misdiagnosed Entity." *Nasza Dermatologia Online* 10.1 (2019): 41-43. Web.
- 2) Barros M, Antunes J, Sofia MA, Calado R. Urticaria multiforme: a benign frightening rash. *BMJ Case Reports*. 2021;14(1). doi:https://doi.org/10.1136/bcr-2020-241011