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Rare Case of Pyoderma Gangrenosum of the Upper Limb

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Abstract : Pyoderma gangrenosum (PG) is a prototypic autoinflammatory neutrophilic dermatosis that is a rare disorder. It presents a diagnostic challenge owing to its variable presentation, clinical overlap with other conditions, it is often associated with other systemic conditions, and there is no definitive histological or laboratory characteristic. The Delphai consensus for PG includes the presence of at least one ulcer on the anterior lower limb. Systemic corticosteroids and immunosuppressive therapies are the mainstay treatment for PG. We describe a case report of delayed diagnosis of ulcerative pyoderma gangrenosum in a 44-year-old male on his forearm. The patient presented with an infected ulcer on his right forearm that had been present for over three years. The patient was a Type 2 Diabetic with no personal or family history of inflammatory bowel disease or other autoimmune diseases. The patient was initially investigated for malignancy, but biopsies returned as chronic inflammatory tissue with neutrophilic infiltrate and no malignancy. The patient was commenced on systemic prednisone for the treatment of pyoderma gangrenosum. The diagnosis of ulcerative PG poses a challenge given the vast differential diagnosis for a cutaneous ulcer (i.e., malignant, vascular, autoimmune, trauma, infective, etc.). Diagnostic accuracy is important given that the treatment for PG with steroids does not go without risks and indeed may be contraindicated in other potential causes of the ulcer. Indeed, more common and more sinister causes of ulcers should be investigated first, as death from PG is quite rare.

Keywords : dermatological diagnosis, dermatosis, pyoderma gangrenosum, rare presentation
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