FOOT BLISTER HERALDS OCCULT GASTROINTESTINAL MALIGNANCY: A CASE REPORT OF SPONTANEOUS NECROTIZING FASCITIS DUE TO CLOSTRIDIUM SEPTICUM

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Introduction

- Spontaneous necrotizing fasciitis (NF) is a potentially fatal infection without antecedent trauma. Clostridium septicum is a colonizer of the gastrointestinal tract in enterocolitis and is an almost exclusive culprit for spontaneous NF.
- Only sparse case reports elicited C. septicum gas gangrene concurrence with gastrointestinal malignancy. 1

Case Presentation

- A 66-year-old male was hospitalized for medical management of diabetic ketoacidosis and non-ST segment elevation myocardial infarction. With appropriate treatment, the patient’s conditions and presenting symptoms improved.
- On day four of hospitalization, he developed a seemingly de novo, progressive, and painful wound on his right foot.
- Examination demonstrated a dusky-colored blistering of the skin with associated erythema and edema. Palpation of this area elicited marked tenderness and dishwater-like drainage from the tissue upon bedside debridement.
- Laboratory testing was utilized to calculate an LRINEC score of 12 suggesting that the patient was considered high risk for having a necrotizing soft tissue infection.

Case Presentation (Cont.)

- Plain films revealed the presence of soft tissue gas congruent with a diagnosis of necrotizing fasciitis.
- Podiatry performed an emergent operative debridement of the wound, which ultimately grew C. septicum.
- The patient had also endorsed episodic right upper quadrant pain prompting an abdominal ultrasound study that revealed indeterminate masses in the liver.
- Follow-up MRI showed innumerable hepatic lesions consistent with metastatic disease.
- This led to investigation for gastrointestinal malignancy. A subsequent colonoscopy revealed masses in the colon and cecum later confirmed to be moderately differentiated adenocarcinoma.

Discussion

- Our case was particularly challenging given a lack of precipitating event and that the initial presentation differed significantly from the ultimate establishment of NF.
- Earlier studies have established that nosocomial onset of NF is associated with a delay in diagnosis and subsequent surgical debridement.
- Our elderly patient had several co-morbid conditions in addition to an elevated LRINEC, all associated with a higher mortality of NF.
- Review of literature shows C. septicum is identified in 10% of NF, but is noted to have a mortality rate of 70% of all NF cases.

References