

Case Report

SCABIES PSORIATICA - NORWEGIAN SCABIES

Florence Issac, MBBS, M.MSc, DIP.Derm.*

Norwegian Scabies (NS) is a highly contagious disease caused by infestation with *Sarcoptes scabiei-var-hominis*, in which the normal response of the host to the presence of the parasite is modified or impaired. There are literally millions of ectoparasites present at one time in a given patient.

THE CASE

A 13 years old mentally retarded boy presented with a six month history of a generalised rash. Other members of his family had nocturnal pruritus. On examination he had crusted psoriasiform lesions on the scalp, axillae, elbows, hands, buttocks and soles. There was subungual hyperkeratosis, and fissuring of the palms (Figure). The patient's sister and brother had scabies. Skin scrapings revealed many mites and numerous faecal pellets. A diagnosis of NS was made, based on the morphology of the lesions, laboratory findings and the positive family history. The patient, his affected family members, as well as other asymptomatic family members at high risk were treated with gamma benzene hexachloride lotion.

DISCUSSION

NS, a rare variety of scabies was first described by Cesar Borok of Norway¹. It occurs in mental defective patients as well as those suffering from malnutrition, and in immunosuppressed patients for any reason. NS may occur in patients with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This would be another opportunistic infection of AIDS presenting with cutaneous manifestation². Absent or reduced pruritus has been suggested as a factor favouring heavy infestation. The essential abnormality leading to this response is still unknown, but is probably an impairment of the cell-mediated immunity³.

Because of the occurrence of heavy psoriasis-like Scales, the author has suggested the Scabies psoriatica.

* Department of Dermatology
Mohammad Dossary Hospital
Alkhobar, Saudi Arabia

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