

Acrodermatitis Chronica Atrophicans in an Italian Child

Sir,

Acrodermatitis chronica atrophicans (ACA) is a late manifestation by Lyme disease (1), characterized by bluish-red discoloration and skin atrophy mainly located on acral parts of the body. It is frequently described in elderly and more rarely in children living in Central or Northern Europe (2). This is a report on a child living in Friuli Venezia Giulia, an Italian region where Lyme disease is endemic.

CASE REPORT

An 11-year-old boy presented the following clinical picture: large areas of white pearly sclero-atrophic skin on the back of hands and feet; on the dorsal aspect of the legs brownish, indurated and hardly extensible skin; large erythematous areas with mildly thinned skin on wrists, right scapular region and neck. The cutaneous manifestations had been present for 4 months, beginning with a mild oedema on the dorsal aspect of the feet. No history of past erythema chronicum migrans was reported. The investigation of IgG antibodies against *Borrelia burgdorferi* (BB) revealed a positive titre of 1:256. The search for BB-specific DNA in tissue by polymerase chain reaction was positive. A treatment with intravenous penicillin G (20 millions units daily for 20 days) was performed. The erythematous atrophic lesions healed shortly after therapy, whereas large pigmentary-atrophic areas still persisted after 6 months. The IgG titre declined.

DISCUSSION

In Italy there are some geographic areas where Lyme disease is endemic: Liguria, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Trentino Alto Adige (3). In the last years a few cases of ACA have been described in these regions, but no cases have been reported in

childhood. Only Trevisan et al. (4) observed a peculiar picture in a 6-year-old child, who showed an atrophodermic lesion shortly after erythema chronicum migrans localized on the mammary area.

The differences in the clinical pictures observed in different regions where Lyme disease is endemic may be related to the unequal distribution of BB genospecies among different areas. In Italy *Borrelia Garinii* seems to be more frequently encountered than *Borrelia Afzelii*, usually found in subjects affected by ACA.

REFERENCES

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S. Menni¹, G. Pistrutto¹, R. Piccinno¹ and G. Trevisan²

¹Institute of Dermatologic Sciences, University of Milan, Via Pace n°9, 20122 Milan, and ²Institute of Dermatology, University of Trieste, Italy.