CLINICAL SNAPSHOT

Pyoderma Gangrenosum after a Biopsy

A 33-year-old woman chronically suffering from ulcerative colitis complained of very painful skin changes on her thigh and was referred with a putative diagnosis of cowpox. Inspection revealed two wounds, each 1 cm in diameter, surrounded by pus and erythema. Serological tests and bacteriological and virological culture swabs were obtained, and a tissue biopsy was performed. One week later, despite local antiseptic treatment, the lesions had become larger and extremely painful. The serological tests and bacterial and viral cultures yielded no clear diagnosis. Histopathological examination revealed inflammation with many neutrophils.

The diagnosis of pyoderma gangrenosum was made in consideration of all the findings and after the exclusion of relevant differential diagnoses. Systemic glucocorticoid treatment was initiated, and the patient's pain improved promptly and markedly; the lesions healed completely, with scarring, in two months' time. In this case, the biopsy led to a rapid increase in the size of the lesions—an illustration of the so-called pathergy phenomenon.

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Conflict of interest statement

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