CLINICAL SNAPSHOT

Leukemia Cutis

A 66-year-old man complained of skin changes that had not responded to treatment. He had first noticed them three years before; they had progressed in recent months, and his general condition had declined. He was under treatment with systemic glucocorticoids and other drugs for suspected sarcoidosis. On physical examination, there were multiple indolent erythematous nodules at many sites on his skin. Histopathological examination of a biopsy specimen revealed an interstitial infiltrate of atypical lymphocytes; laboratory testing revealed a massive leukocytosis (96 000/ μ L). We were able to cytogenetically demonstrate the Philadelphia chromosome and to establish the initial diagnosis of chronic myeloid leukemia (CML). Cutaneous findings in patients with CML may include nodules, plaques, vesicles, or ulcers. The simultaneous cutaneous and systemic manifestation of the disease has been described in as many as 23% of patients; approximately 7% of patients with cutaneous infiltration do not have leukemia in the blood. In such cases, skin biopsy is essential for the establishment of the diagnosis.

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