Lucio’s Phenomenon: A Case Report

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INTRODUCTION:
Lucio’s phenomenon (LPh) is a manifestation of untreated leprosy seen in regions surrounding the Gulf of Mexico. Its occurrence elsewhere is considered uncommon. We present an occurrence of LPh, in an undiagnosed patient with borderline leprosy who presented with dry gangrene of the toe.

CASE REPORT:
Mr. A, a 71-year-old, Malay presented with dry gangrene of his right second toe. Patient underwent disarticulation, however post surgery patient developed purplish discoloration over both hands and feet which were initially thought to be due to skin allergy. He was referred to dermatology and a biopsy from a nodule on his upper lip was sent for histopathology examination (HPE), which was consistent with borderline leprosy. He was started on antitubercular multidrug therapy but developed nosocomial pneumonia and subsequently succumbed to it.

RESULTS:
The patient was referred to a dermatologist where the histopathology examination revealed vague granuloma associated with mild lymphocytes infiltrate. Grenz zone is seen with inflammatory cell infiltrate. Wade-Fite stain was positive for acid fast bacilli. These findings were consistent with borderline leprosy.

DISCUSSIONS:
This patient initially presented to us with infected right 2nd toe dry gangrene secondary to possible peripheral vascular disease. However, peripheral vascular examination was normal. The development of purplish discoloration of his feet and hands prompted us into re-establishing his diagnosis with our medical colleague and revised the diagnosis to systemic vasculitis. The decision to do skin biopsy proved to be a crucial factor in confirming diagnosis of leprosy.

CONCLUSION:
Although leprosy is now uncommon, regional patterns of atypical manifestations should not limit better understanding of rarer manifestations as it will aid in clinching an early diagnosis and instituting prompt treatment, thereby reducing morbidity and mortality.

REFERENCES: