

Multiple Bowen's disease in chronic arsenicosis

Sir,

Bowen's disease is a carcinoma *in-situ* of skin. It was first described by John T. Bowen. It usually present as a solitary lesion in elderly person over sun-exposed area. A case of multiple Bowen's disease involving non-sun exposed areas of a person with clinical sign of chronic arsenicosis has been found.

A 25-years-old man presented with multiple asymptomatic skin lesions all over the body for past six months. Since childhood, he lives in Kaliachak of Malda District in West Bengal. This area is known to contain arsenic in deep water. So he was exposed to arsenic since his childhood contaminated through water.

On examination, multiple well demarcated scaly kidney shaped plaques was found all over his body, along with rain drop pigmentations over his anterior chest [Figures 1 and 2] and hyperkeratosis of palms and soles. Arsenic concentration in hair and nail has not been done but chronic arsenicosis has been diagnosed on clinical findings. Histopathology of the lesion showed cellular atypia in the form of hyperchromatic nuclei and loss of polarity except basal cell layer. [Figures 3, 4 and 5].

Bowen's disease was first described by American dermatologist John T Bowen in 1912. Bowen's disease is carcinoma *in-situ* with potential of lateral spread.^[1,2] It is clinically found in elderly person as a solitary irregular well-defined scaly plaque on sun-exposed part of the body.^[3-7] Rapid growth and ulceration are signs of invasive carcinoma.^[8] Delay of diagnosis often occurred because the lesions being asymptomatic.

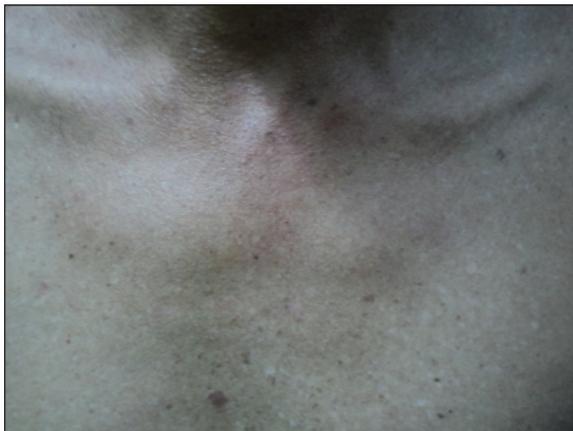


Figure 1: Clinical photo of patient showing multiple hypopigmented and hyperpigmented rain drops like spots along with multiple erythematous well-defined scaly patches



Figure 2: A well-defined patch with adherent scales on left leg

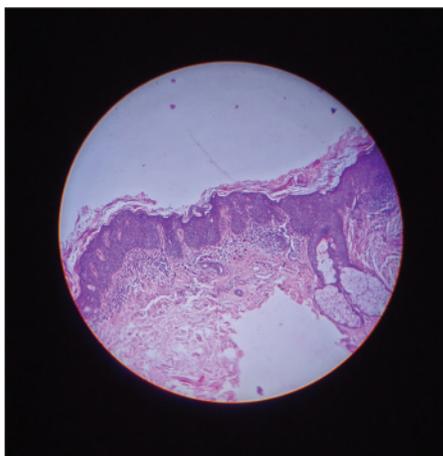


Figure 3: Histopathology shows the epidermis is irregularly thickened with elongation of rete ridges but dermo-epidermal junction is sharp and intact (10x)

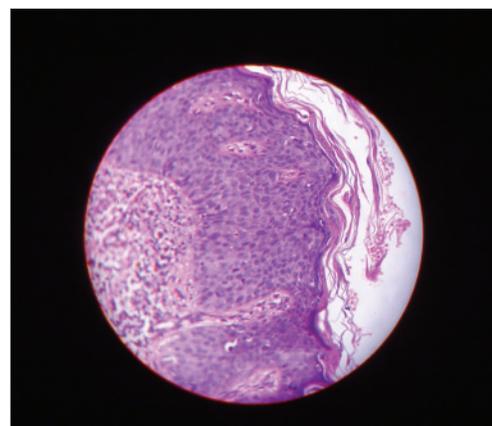


Figure 4: Throughout the epidermis, cell lies in different orientation. The keratin layer is thickened and parakeratotic (40x)

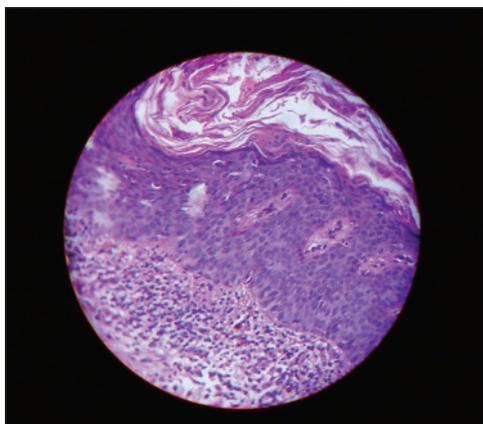


Figure 5: Multinucleated epidermal cells and dyskeratotic cells are found throughout the epidermis (100x)

This case has shown that multiple Bowen's disease may affect young person in chronic arsenicosis and so early diagnosis is very important for the benefit of the patient.

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