Blue coloured skin in psoriatic arthritis

Sirs,

Psoriatic arthritis (PsA) is disease that originates from many reasons (1,2). The appearance of the skin over the joint leads to the diagnosis with great probability. We have confirmed this fact by findings on a large number of patients with PsA. We examined 650 patients with the diagnosis of PsA and 1,265 patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) during the period 1975 to 1998. Besides the clinical examination, we performed laboratory testing, radiographs of involved joints and axial skeleton as well as histocompatibility antigen assays according to Terasaki and McClelland (3).

Diagnostic criteria for PsA were existence of arthritis and psoriasis at typical areas (extensor sides of elbows and knees) or at so-called hidden areas (axilla, breast, scalp, umbilicus, nails, interdigital cleft, obscure or hurdle) (3-6). All patients with RA fulfilled the Rome criteria and after 1988 the revised ARA criteria (7). In 484 patients with PsA (74.4%) the psoriasis appeared before arthritis; in 150 patients (23.1%) arthritis appeared first; and in 16 patients (2.5%) arthritis and psoriasis appeared simultaneously. Sixty patients (9.2%) had the monoarticular form of arthritis, 320 of them (49.2%) the oligoarticular form and 270 patients (48.8%) arthritis mutilans. 128 (19.7%) had spondylarthritides.

It also rarely occurs with such intensity during hot days, for instance in the summer, or causing hot days, for instance in the summer, or during worsening of the disease. The whole skin in psoriasis is rather darker, especially in the regions exposed to the sun (hands, head, face). If psoriasis was present as well, a white blanching ring could be found around the erythema that is developing toward a blue colour (8, 9). However, in Caucasians the colour of the skin on psoriasis is salmon-pink whereas rupoid (Ps ruposa seu ostraceae) are waxy-blue to orange-brown (10), i.e. quite different from the colour of the skin in PsA.

In conclusion, we may say that we have found a sure sign of PsA - blue coloured skin over involved joints - that is a condition almost sine qua non to reach the diagnosis.

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