

Letters to the Editor

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Dactylitis involving most of the fingers

Sirs,
Dactylitis or "sausage-like" digit is a clinical

hallmark of spondyloarthritis (SpA) (1-3). Although more frequent in psoriatic arthritis (PsA) (1, 4), dactylitis has been observed in all forms of SpA including the undifferentiated forms (1-3). Recent studies using ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) have established that dactylitis is due to flexor tenosynovitis and arthritis of the interphalangeal and metacarpophalangeal (or metatarsophalangeal) joints is not a *condition sine qua non* for the "sausage-shaped" feature (5-7). Dactylitis is usually asymmetric and involves few fingers and/or toes.

We have recently come across a 37-year-old man suffering from PsA and showing dactylitis of most of his fingers. His family history was negative for SpA and psoriasis. His medical history revealed that he had been suffering from psoriasis for 18 years. Four months before the consultation he developed "sausage-like" swelling of most fingers together with Achilles enthesitis. Physical examination disclosed dactylitis of the second, third and fourth fingers of the right hand and of the first, third, fourth and fifth left fingers. There was also a soft tissue swelling along his left Achilles tendon and at his calcaneal insertion. The only aspect of the laboratory evaluation worthy of note was a C-reactive protein level of 20.6 mg/liter (normal < 5). HLA typing showed A2, A30, B38, and B51. Magnetic resonance imaging revealed fluid in the synovial sheaths of all the dactylitic fingers

(Fig. 1). Ultrasonography showed a moderate diffuse thickening of the left Achilles tendon together with an enlarged bursa. The patient was given methotrexate at a dose of 10 mg/day and diclofenac at a dose of 100 mg/day with good results.

The present report emphasizes that dactylitis may simultaneously involve most of the fingers.

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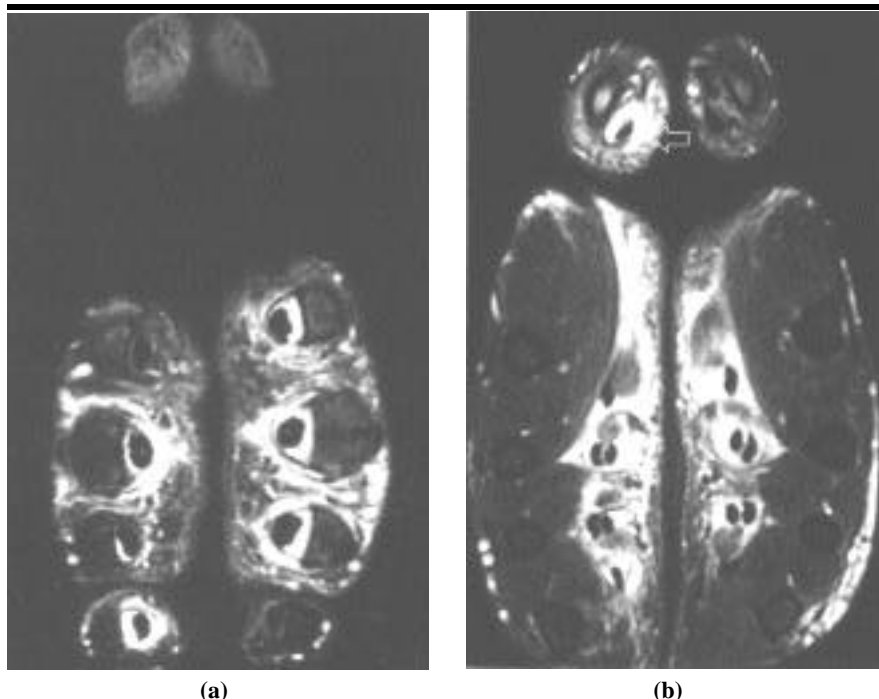


Fig. 1. (a) T2-weighted image at the level of the proximal interphalangeal joints showing fluid in the synovial sheaths of the 3rd, 4th and 5th left fingers and in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th right fingers. (b) T2-weighted image at the level of the metacarpophalangeal joints showing also the involvement of the 1st left finger (arrow).