

Answers

1. The diagnosis is primary necrotizing fasciitis (NF) of the breast.
2. Patients susceptible to this condition include those with diabetes mellitus, peripheral vascular disease, advanced age, blunt or penetrating trauma, obesity, abscesses, intravenous drug or alcohol abuse, renal failure, and hypertension (1-3).
3. NF may affect any part of the body, but the sites more commonly affected are the perianal region, scrotum (Fournier's gangrene), breasts, and extremities (1, 4).

Discussion

Necrotizing fasciitis is a rapidly progressive and potentially fatal soft tissue infection characterized by widespread necrosis of the subcutaneous tissue and fascia. It was first defined by Wilson in 1952 (5). Primary NF of the breast with no history of trauma or surgery is a rare clinical condition. Shah et al. (4), reported the first case of primary NF of the breast in the last decade. Since then, limited number of cases of NF of the breast have been described in the literature.

Primary NF of breast infections are usually polymicrobial and affect both lactating and postmenopausal women. Microbial invasion of the subcutaneous tissue may be idiopathic, as in our case (2). Diagnosis is often delayed and is mainly based on primary clinical examination findings. Timely diagnosis and prompt treatment of the disease are based on a high index of clinical suspicion. Management options include immediate resuscitation, early surgical debridement, and administration of broad-spectrum intravenous antibiotics (1, 2). NF has a high mortality rate and deaths have been reported even in cases of primary NF of breast.

In conclusion, we report a case of fulminant NF presenting as bilateral breast necrosis. Despite its rarity and unusual presentation,

this case illustrates the considerable mortality that can be associated with NF infections. Emergency physicians should not forget that a high index of suspicion is required to diagnose NF and aggressive resuscitation, rapid surgical debridement, and broad-spectrum antibiotic therapy are the cornerstones of management.

Informed Consent: Informed consent was not obtained from the patient because she was deceased.

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