



Internal Medicine Flashcard

Spontaneous discoloration of the finger in a 67-year-old woman

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1. Case description

A 67-year-old woman presented to our clinic because she had developed spontaneous pain and purple discoloration of the fourth finger of her right hand that had started the previous day. She had experienced similar episodes previously, which were not related to cold exposure and had resolved spontaneously. She had no history of trauma and was not taking any medication. On examination, the finger showed mild swelling and a reddish-purple hematoma centered around the proximal interphalangeal joint (Fig. 1). The area was tender and she reported paresthesia. Blood tests showed a normal platelet count and found no abnormalities in the coagulation system.

What is the diagnosis?

Diagnosis: Achenbach's syndrome.

2. Discussion

Achenbach's syndrome can cause paroxysmal finger hematomas [1]. Its etiology is unknown, but its incidence is highest in middle-aged women (2–7 times that in men) [2]. The syndrome most commonly affects the middle and proximal phalangeal regions of the index and middle fingers [3], but can also occur on the palm, wrist, toes, and sole of the foot [2]. The chief complaints are bruising, pain, swelling, and paresthesia [2]. The condition is sometimes recurrent (three times on average) [2]. Spontaneous recovery occurs within 2–14 days (mean duration, 4 days) [1], but recovery within several hours has also been reported [2]. Our patient recovered within 7 days without treatment.

The differential diagnosis includes acute ischemia, Raynaud's syndrome, acrocyanosis, Gardner-Diamond syndrome (psychogenic purpura), and chilblains; however, Achenbach's syndrome can be

diagnosed based on a detailed medical history and the physical signs [1].

Clinicians should be familiar with Achenbach's syndrome in order to make a correct diagnosis so that they can reassure patients that it is not a serious condition and treat it conservatively.

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Consent

The patient has provided consent for the publication of this report.

Declaration of Competing Interest

None

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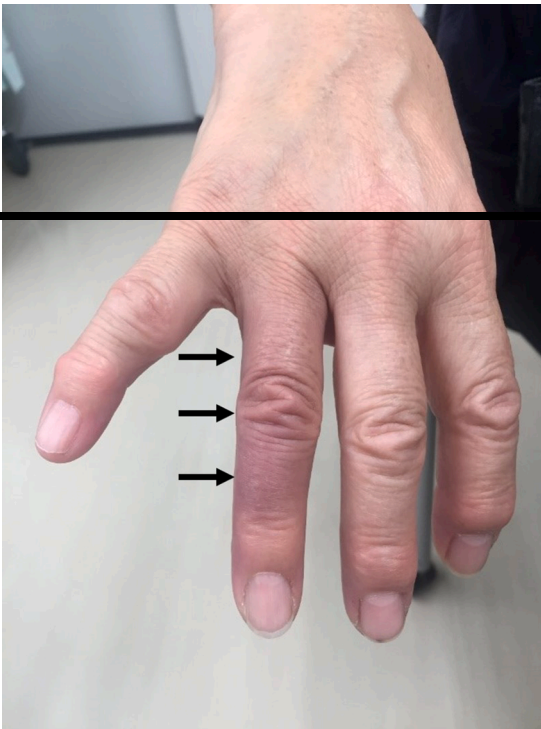


Fig. 1. Mild swelling on the fourth finger of the right hand, with a reddish-purple hematoma on the back, centered around the proximal interphalangeal joint. (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.).