Bilaterial Leg Ulcerations in a Patient with Diabetes Mellitus Secondary to Lobular Panniculitis: A Case Study and Literature Review

Desiree Garzon DPM, Jordan Tacktill DPM, Alan MacGill DPM, FACFAS
Bethesda Health Podiatric Medicine and Surgery Residency Program—Boynton Beach, FL

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
An uncommon inflammatory disorder of the subcutaneous tissue known as lobular panniculitis is diagnosed in a 58-year-old diabetic female with bilateral leg ulcerations. Panniculitis is a cutaneous condition that is often a manifestation of underlying pathology. Panniculitis most commonly occurs in children, but adult cases have been reported in the literature as well. Lobular panniculitis has been described, septal and lobular panniculitis (1). Although there are numerous cases reported, there is insufficient pathologic classification of this condition.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Literature reporting this condition has seldom discussed its occurrence in the lower extremity in diabetic adults. The few reported cases of lobular panniculitis occurred in patients with diabetes and no other evidence of systemic disease. The majority of cases have resulted in the patient being referred to a rheumatologist for an autoimmune workup. Methylprednisolone was prescribed and the patient was referred to a rheumatologist for an autoimmune workup. At the same visit, a new punch biopsy was obtained on the right leg. The specimen contained fibrous tissue with collagen bundles in the superficial and deep dermis. The subcutaneous tissue contained adipose filled with granular material and inflammatory cells with predomination of lymphocytes and mast cells.

An autoimmune component has been illustrated in recent literature with conditions such as alopecia areata, Graves’ disease, Hashimoto’s disease, as well as antibodies to thyroglobulin, thyroid microsomal and parietal gastric cells (6,7,8).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
Lobular panniculitis is a rare inflammatory disorder of the subcutaneous adipose tissue, which becomes challenging to treat based on its presence or absence of systemic or metabolic disease. The treatment of panniculitis may vary based on whether the findings are atrophic or inflammatory. Diagnosis of lobular panniculitis is most commonly performed at the biopsy level. It is important to perform this diagnostic test in the inflammatory phase because the subcutaneous tissue tends to fibrose towards the healing phase and the histology report will be inconclusive (2).

REFERENCES


