

Case report: Tuberculous fasciitis combined in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus patient

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Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease that often occurs in immunocompromised people. In regions such as Korea where tuberculosis is endemic, physicians who treat immunocompromised patients need to pay special attention. TB fasciitis is extremely rare. It is often mistaken for cellulitis or autoimmune fasciitis. Herein, we share our experience of a patient with autoimmune disease who developed tuberculous. A 53-year-old female patient was diagnosed with systemic lupus erythematosus. She has been on steroid treatment since March 2020. She complained fever and left mid medial thigh pain in April 2021. Her body temperature was consistently above 39°C. Upon palpation, her thighs were accompanied by painful swelling, redness, and heating sensations. Initial lab showed C-reactive protein level of 71.70 mg/L, erythrocyte sedimentation rate of 57 mm/hr, white blood cell count of 4110/ μ L, and neutrophil percentage of 76.8%. When contrast enhanced left thigh magnetic resonance imaging scan (Figures 1 and 2) was performed for diagnosis, an increased signal in the left sartorius muscle and increased fluid along the fascia were observed. For differential diagnosis, muscle biopsy was performed. Mycobacterium tuberculosis polymerase chain reaction was positive on tissue. Chronic granulomatous inflammation was found on pathology. When we performed chest computed tomography scan to identify the radical cause of TB fasciitis, miliary TB was confirmed (Figure 3). After proper management of TB (Isoniazid + rifampin + ethambutol + pyrazinamide for 2 months followed by isoniazid + rifampin for 10 months) for 12 months, tuberculosis has resolved. She has remained stable for more than three months. Although TB fasciitis is very rare, it can be easily overlooked. It is essential to include it in the differential diagnosis of muscle pain in immunocompromised patients. In particular, since TB fasciitis often accompanies miliary TB, it is necessary to conduct an examination.

