

NOTALGIA PARESTHETICA: AN UNUSUAL PRESENTATION IN AN ADULT WOMAN

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Background: Notalgia paresthetica is a chronic cutaneous neuropathy characterized by unilateral pruritus in the infrascapular area, that may be associated with sensory disturbances, as well hyperpigmented macule. Even though the pathology is quite common, it remains underdiagnosed, especially when the clinical presentation is atypical. The objective of this case report is to highlight the unusual clinical presentation to aid correct diagnosis.

Case presentation: A 56-year-old woman presented with a 1.5-year history of a recurrent rash in her left subscapular region and forearm, associated with persistent pruritus. The patient has a history of periodic thoracic pain for 6 years and skin hyperpigmentation in this region. The differential diagnosis of skin changes and localized pruritus with pigmentation on the back included contact dermatitis, lichen simplex, herpes zoster, zosteriform lichen planus, due to similar pigmentation and itch which typically affects the back. The biopsy examination data revealed non-specific inflammatory changes, which were considered secondary to chronic scratching in notalgia paresthetica. Imaging investigation showed degenerative cervicothoracic spinal disease corresponding to the dermatome of the cutaneous lesion. The patient gained symptomatic relief with medical, physical, and topical therapy.

Discussion: The clinical case reveals an atypical presentation of notalgia paresthetica with pruritus and hyperpigmentation in the subscapular region in association with brachioradialis pruritus, which has also been described in a large number of patients. Clinicians should remain alert to the potential diagnostic errors related to misinterpretation of similar clinical and skin manifestations. A multidisciplinary approach is essential for the timely management of patients with notalgia paresthetica.

