Image Letter

Amelanotic Melanoma Presenting As A Scaly Plaque

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Case presentation

An 86-year-old female with a history of multiple non-melanoma skin cancers and extensive sun damage was evaluated for an eczematous lesion on the left arm. Dermatological examination revealed a 40 x 58 mm pink scaly plaque with structureless tan areas, shiny white lines, and a solitary blue-grey globule under dermoscopy. An excisional biopsy was performed that confirmed a 0.5-mm depth invasive amelanotic melanoma (AM).

Teaching point

The diagnosis of AM remains a challenge. It usually presents as papulonodular or ulcerated lesions (58%) [1]. Other rare forms can present as erythematous macules or patches or as eczema-like plaque as in our case [2]. They lack 'ABCD' criteria, and due to the lack of pigmentation, there is a diagnosis delay [1,2]. When it comes to solitary eczematous lesions resistant to topical treatment, the

differential diagnosis includes basal cell carcinoma (BCC), Bowen's disease, extramammary Paget's disease, lichen sclerosus et atrophicus and, less frequently, mycosis fungoides. Although a scaly plaque being a rare presentation, AM should also be included in this differential, especially in patients with extensive sun damage and a history of skin malignancy. Dermoscopy can provide important clues, including the presence of dotted, serpentine, and polymorphous vessels, milky-red areas, shiny white structures, and light brown structureless areas (in hypomelanotic melanomas) [2]. In this case, the presence of polymorphous vessels and structureless tan areas should raise the possibility of AM; however, the scale and 'orangy' areas were more suggestive of eczema, and the presence of a 'bluish globule' misled us towards BCC.

References

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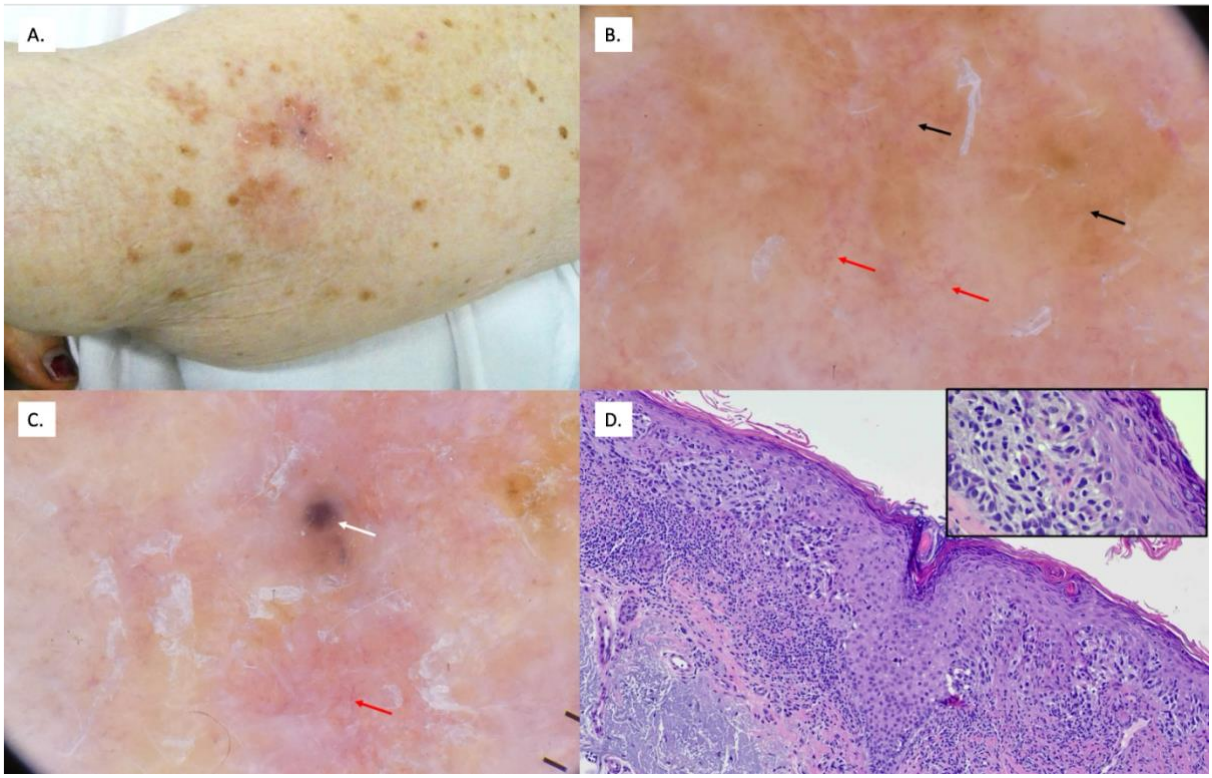

Figure 1. Amelanotic melanoma. A: Clinical photo showing a pink, ill-defined, scaly plaque. B: Dermoscopic photo showing tan structureless areas (black arrows) and polymorphous vessels (red arrows) (polarized light dermoscopy, original magnification 10x). C: Dermoscopic photo showing a "blue-grey globule" (white arrow) and polymorphous vessels (red arrow) (polarized light dermoscopy, original magnification 10x). D: Photomicrograph showing an atypical proliferation of melanocytes in the junction with pagetoid ascent (H&E, 20x).