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DERMATOLOGY IMAGES

A hidden honeycomb: onychomatricoma

Um favo de mel escondido: onicomatricoma

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Onychomatricoma is a rare, slow-growing, benign fibroepithelial tumor of the nail matrix first described in 1992[1]. Middle-aged to older adults are most commonly affected, with fingernails involved approximately twice as often as toenails[2,3]. The tumor is typically indolent and asymptomatic, contributing to frequent misdiagnosis and delayed recognition[3,4]. Clinically, onychomatricoma is characterized by linear nail plate thickening, transverse overcurvature, and proximal splinter hemorrhages[3-5]. In addition, linear white/yellow finger-like projections are seen as honeycomb-like cavities when examined end-on, and enhanced with dermoscopy[3,4]. Secondary fungal colonization may occur, which may contribute to misdiagnosis[2].

A 64-year-old female presented with a 15-year history of progressive nail changes of the right thumbnail, associated with significant cosmetic distress. A prior nail clipping reportedly demonstrated fungal hyphae, and the patient underwent prolonged topical antifungal therapy and a brief trial of oral terbinafine without clinical improvement. Physical examination demonstrated linear xanthonychia with focal nail plate thickening (Fig. 1). Dermoscopic end-on evaluation of the distal nail plate demonstrated honeycomb-like cavitations with filamentous projections (Fig. 2), which is reported in up to 70-80% of cases and considered highly suggestive of onychomatricoma[3,4].

While histology remains the diagnostic gold standard, dermoscopy serves as a valuable noninvasive tool to improve preoperative recognition and aid in distinguishing onychomatricoma from malignant nail unit tumors. Increased awareness of these hallmark features may reduce unnecessary antifungal treatments and diagnostic delay.

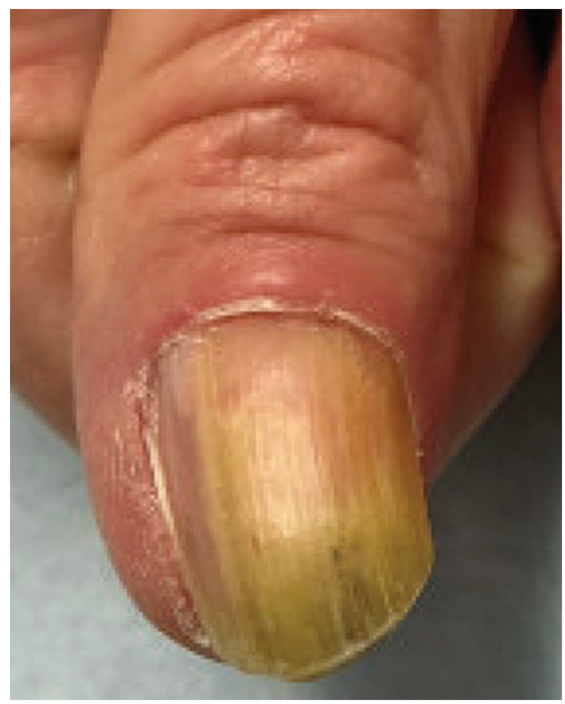

Figure 1. Right thumbnail with linear xanthonychia.

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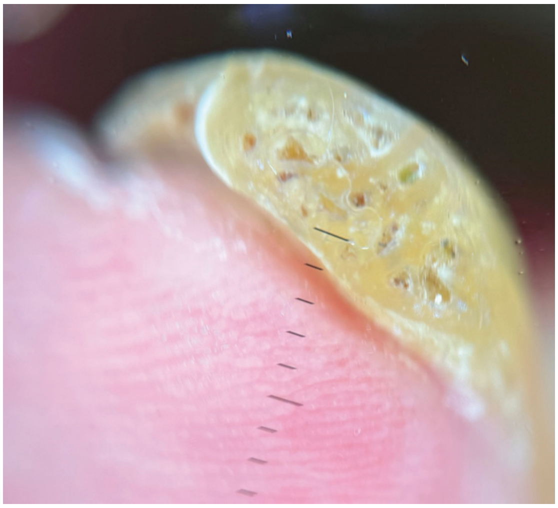

Figure 2. Dermoscopic end-on evaluation of the distal right thumbnail demonstrating nail plate thickening and honeycomb-like cavitations with filamentous projections.

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Conflicts of interest

None.

Ethical considerations

Protection of human subjects and animals. The authors declare that no experiments on humans or animals were performed for this research.

Confidentiality, informed consent, and ethical approval. The authors have followed their institution's confidentiality protocols, obtained informed consent from all patients, and secured approval from the Ethics Committee. SAGER guidelines have been followed as applicable to the nature of the study.

Declaration on the use of artificial intelligence (IA). The authors declare that no generative artificial intelligence was used in the writing or creation of the content of this manuscript.

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