

CLINICAL IMAGE

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Deep vein thrombosis of the upper limb

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CASE REPORT

An 83-year-old woman with a history of right breast cancer was hospitalized for the diagnostic workup of a lytic lesion. She previously underwent mastectomy, radiotherapy, and chemotherapy for the tumor. On the sixth day of hospitalization, she presented blanchable erythema on the right upper limb (Figure 1). The limb had a strong pulse, with no other abnormalities noted on physical examination. There was no history of recent manipulation of the limb. A contrasted computed tomography (CT) scan showed maintained patency of the subclavian vein but with filiform filling. As skin color progressively worsened with wine discoloration and the limb started presenting edema (Figure 2), a Doppler ultrasound was performed, revealing acute, occlusive subclavian vein thrombosis. Anticoagulation with low molecular weight heparin was started, and the patient showed progressive improvement. One and a half weeks after the start of the therapy, edema resolved, and the skin discoloration improved (Figure 3).



Figure 1: On the sixth day of hospitalization, the patient presented a blanchable erythema on the right upper limb, as represented on this image.

DISCUSSION

Only about 10% of deep vein thromboses involve the upper limb [1]. Central venous catheterization, malignancy, radiotherapy, and chemotherapy are risk factors for this condition [2]. This patient presented a secondary form of deep vein thrombosis, characterized



Figure 2: Evolution of the skin discoloration, with progressively intense wine coloring.

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Figure 3: After the start of anticoagulant therapy, the skin discoloration improved.

by exuberant skin color manifestations, as shown in the images. Appropriate anticoagulation therapy led to improvement in her condition, with progressive normalization of the skin discoloration.

CONCLUSION

This case highlights a rare and exuberant form of upper extremity deep vein thrombosis. The patient's rapid response to anticoagulation therapy underscores the effectiveness of this treatment in managing the condition, preventing further complications, and improving clinical outcomes.

Keywords: Anticoagulation therapy, Breast cancer complications, Subclavian vein occlusion, Upper extremity deep vein thrombosis

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Author Contributions

Rui Jorge Sousa da Silva – Conception of the work, Drafting the work, Revising the work critically for important intellectual content, Final approval of the version to be published, Agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved

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Conflict of Interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

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