

An unusual and severe case of paclitaxel-induced hand-foot syndrome

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Key Clinical Message

Although paclitaxel is considered as a safe drug to the skin, it may cause severe HFS that could seriously affect patients' quality of life. Careful assessment should be conducted at each cycle to make necessary dose adjustments or drug suspension.

Comment

A 44-year-old premenopausal female with a history of acute coronary syndrome nine months earlier was referred to our department for right-sided metastatic breast cancer. The pathology report showed mixed ductal-lobular invasive carcinoma, HER2 negative, hormone receptor-positive. Staging workup revealed multiple metastases in the liver with diffuse peritoneal carcinosis. As anthracyclines were contraindicated, first-line weekly paclitaxel at a dose of 80mg/m² was initiated. Over nine courses, the patient had a complete peritoneal response and partial response to hepatic lesions. Maintenance therapy with letrozole was carried out for four months. The patient presented then liver disease progression with abundant ascites. Weekly paclitaxel was reintroduced at the same dose. After six infusions, the patient presented WHO grade 2, hand-foot syndrome, which resumed two weeks of chemotherapy discontinuation. Paclitaxel was reintroduced with preventive topical emollients and a 20% dose reduction. After three other courses, the patient presented erythematous and violaceous lesions of her palms (figure A) and multiple ulcerations and epidermal necrolysis of the dorsum of her foot (figure B) associated with severe peeling soles and bleeding (figure C & D). The patient was referred to the dermatology department, where analgesics, emollients, topical steroids, and antibiotics were prescribed. Paclitaxel was then withdrawn. Three weeks later, the patient died due to disease progression, as no other chemotherapy could be initiated.

Author Contribution

Ichrak Ben Abdallah: uploaded the clinical images and wrote the content.

Sonia Ben Nasr, Aref Zribi, Jihene Ayarai and Sana Fendri: revised the manuscript.

Abderrazek Haddaoui and Mehdi Balti: gave approval for the final version to be published.

List of Figures

Figure A. Erythematous and violaceous lesions induced by paclitaxel.

Figure B. Paclitaxel-induced ulcerations and epidermal necrolysis of the dorsum of the foot.

Figure C. Paclitaxel-induced severe peeling feet.

Figure D. Paclitaxel-induced peeling, bleeding, and onycholysis.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

Ethical approval

The patient gave verbal and written consent for the publication of these clinical images.

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