

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION ΣΥΝΕΧΙΖΟΜΕΝΗ ΙΑΤΡΙΚΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

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Vascular Diseases Quiz – Case 49

A 34-year-old female complained of left lower limb heaviness and gradually worsening burning sensation for ten months. She also complained that leg veins have become more prominent a couple of months ago and they expanded since then (fig. 1). The patient's medical history was insignificant and she had no children. She had a desk job and she jogged every second day for 45 minutes.

- (a) What is her health problem?
- (b) What diagnostic method should be used for further diagnosis?
- (c) What is the treatment?

Comment

This patient suffered from spider veins or telangiectasias, a dilatation of the superficial veins. Spider veins are usually red, blue or purple in colour and have a twisting course. They usually develop on the face or lower limbs. Women are affected more often than men. Constipation, obesity, occupations involving a prolonged standing posture, hormonal misbalance (pregnancy, puberty, menopause)



Figure 1. Spider veins.

are often linked to this condition. Other causes also exist, such as blood clotting disorders.

This condition is benign and often free of symptoms. Apart from the esthetic issue, patients less frequently feel burning, tingling or heaviness of the affected limb. As telangiectasia is often the result of vein insufficiency, it is impossible to consider any symptoms as the result of telangiectasia and not of the underlying problem of vein insufficiency.

Duplex ultrasound scan is necessary to diagnose any underlying vein insufficiency. No other imaging modality or laboratory test is necessary for diagnosis.

Support elastic stocking, exercise and lifestyle changes are all accepted as measures to prevent and treat telangiectasias. In those cases that symptoms are present or the patient needs to improve the esthetic of the affected area, sclerotherapy and surface laser or intense pulsed light are the existing treatment choices. If vein insufficiency is present, then telangiectasias should be treated after the insufficiency is properly treated, since many cases of spider veins spontaneously resolve once the causing vein problem is addressed.

References

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Diagnosis: Spider veins or telangiectasias