

Shingles Case Study Competition

Mr V has been a patient of mine for three years. He is a young seventy year old with mild hypertension, controlled with Inderal LA 160 and Moduretic. He has no other illnesses and is in reasonably good health. He goes to the gym on a regular basis, and this is where he first noticed a rash on his backside.

He telephoned me on the 16th of June and sounded very anxious as he described a painful rash on his left buttock: "I'm sure I have caught something at the gym". The first symptoms were experienced on the 11th of June after a sauna. The left buttock, perineum, penis, and scrotum were affected. At first there was only a mild discomfort in the area, but after approximately twenty four hours there was a severe burning sensation.

The rash appeared on the 15th of June, and covered the left buttock, left side of the penis, scrotum, perineum, and a small patch on the left flank.

I asked Mr V to come in and let me examine the rash, which he did that morning. There was no doubt as to the clinical diagnosis of Shingles, and Mr V seemed rather relieved to hear that it was not something that he had caught at the gym! He was in severe pain and found it very difficult to sit.

He was given a prescription for Zovirax 800mg five times per day, and Etraphon D 1 tab tds for pain. I asked him to return on the 18th of June for a follow up consultation.

I telephoned the next day to enquire about Mr V and was told by his wife that the Etraphon had made him sleepy, but otherwise he was still very uncomfortable.

On the 18th of June Mr V returned to see me. I had my camera at the rooms and asked for his consent to take some photos of his rash. He agreed and proceeded to undress. The rash had changed from blisters to a crust of scabs stretching from his penis to his buttock. Unfortunately he was still in a lot of pain and was taking the Etraphon three times a day. I reassured him that it was still too early to expect complete recovery and that we should take another look on the 23rd of June.

Eight days after the rash appeared, on the 23rd, it had all but cleared up. All that was left to see was a very red perineum, penis and buttock. There were a few small dry scabs on the upper part of the buttock and very little pain.

Mr V was delighted at the results of the treatment: "When my wife had Shingles it took weeks to clear up, and she had pain for months afterwards". He added that he was quite shocked at the price of the medication, but that "It was worth every cent".

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