Other conditions should also be considered in the
differential diagnosis, including joint tophi, xanthomatous
deposits, and paraneoplastic acroactyly.11

The histopathological findings of pachydermodactyly
include a thickened dermis, with an increase in the
number of collagen fibers accompanied by a discreet
increase in the number of fibroblasts. There is also a slight
increase in the quantity of mucin, with no significant
inflammatory infiltrate. The overlying epidermis often
shows hyperkeratosis with compact orthokeratosis.

Local infiltration of triamcinolone hexacetonide
and resection of the fibrotic subcutaneous tissue can
improve the outward appearance. Treatment with topical
corticosteroids has not been shown to be effective.12

To date, few cases of pachydermodactyly have been
reported in the medical literature, probably because its
prevalence is underestimated due to its asymptomatic
nature and the fact that it does not limit joint mobility.
We believe it is necessary to consider other disorders in
the differential diagnosis in order to avoid unnecessary
additional tests and treatments, as pachydermodactyly
is a completely benign disorder and does not require
treatment.

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Pachydermodactyly: a case of an unusual type of reactive

A.M. Morales Callaghan, a, * C. Horndler Aragarte, b
F.J. García Latasa de Araníbar, a and M.L. Zubiri Ara a

aServicio de Dermatología, Hospital Miguel Servet,
Zaragoza, Spain
bAnatomía Patológica, Hospital Miguel Servet,
Zaragoza, Spain

*Corresponding author.
E-mail address: acallaghan@aedv.es
(A.M. Morales Callaghan).

Subungual Squamous Cell Carcinoma.
Presentation of two Cases

Carcinoma escamoso subungueal.
Presentación de dos casos

To the Editor:

Primary malignant subungal tumors are rare, although,
of these, squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) is the most
frequent. Initial diagnosis is frequently delayed by the
relatively nonspecific clinical presentation, easily confused
with benign inflammatory conditions such as paronychia,
pyogenic granuloma, or a common wart. Diagnosis of this
kind of lesion is only possible by pathology study of a
biopsy. Treatment requires complete excision of the lesion,
often leading in turn, to amputation of the distal phalanx
of the affected finger. We describe 2 new cases of difficult-
to-diagnose subungal SCC.

The first patient was a man aged 73 years, with a history
of hypertensive-ischemic heart disease, who consulted with
an ex crescendent lesion of the nail bed of the first finger of
the right hand which had developed over the previous 4
years (Figure 1). The patient reported no possible triggering
factors such as repeated injury or viral warts at this site.
Surgery was performed twice on the patient, and the
pathology diagnosis was digital fibrokeratoma. The patient
had responded poorly to treatment with different topical
antibiotic and antifungal agents. Examination revealed a
suppurating tumoral lesion, adherent to the nail plate
of the first finger of the right hand and causing painful
onychodytrosis. An ingrown nail with excessive granulation
tissue was suspected. A biopsy confirmed the diagnosis of
subungal SCC, and the lesion was excised. No bone
involvement was evident on an x-ray of the first finger of

*Corresponding author.
E-mail address: acallaghan@aedv.es
(A.M. Morales Callaghan).
Excrescent lesion at the lateral border of the nail plate with minimal superficial erosion.

Proliferation of squamous cells with marked atypia infiltrating the dermis. Note the frequent mitotic figures and abundant dyskeratotic cells. Hematoxylin-eosin, original magnification ×100.

Excrescent subungual tumor, with a fleshy, erosive appearance.

Malignant subungual tumors may be primary or metastatic. Metastasis from internal tumors, which is very rare, usually originates from tumors in the lung, genitourinary tract (especially the kidney), or breast. Metastasis indicates a poor prognosis as it is a sign of disseminated disease.1

Subungual SCC, first described by Velpeau in 1850,2 is a tumor with little aggressive potential, and axillary lymph node spread and metastasis are both rare. Bone involvement has been reported in 17% and 66% of cases,3,4 with the difference explained by diagnostic delay.

The condition, which generally affects men aged over 50 years, most typically occurs on the distal phalanx of either of the first two fingers of the hands, but has also been reported on the toes.3-6

The etiology of these tumors is unknown, although repeated injury, chronic infection, ionizing and nonionizing radiation, arsenicals and tar, and, above all, human papillomavirus infection can all be considered as risk factors.6-8 The fact that clinical presentation resembles conditions such as ingrown nails, pyogenic granuloma, warts, and melanonychia frequently leads to incorrect or delayed diagnosis, resulting in inappropriate or delayed treatment.

In recent years, a viral origin has been postulated as the cause of many skin tumors, among them subungual SCC. Type 16 human papillomavirus, which is typical in genital warts, is most associated with subungual SCC; transmission probably occurs from scratching of the genital region.6-10 Other factors are undoubtedly involved in the malignancy, as viral warts on the hands are very common, whereas the development of subungual SCC is rare.

The therapeutic options vary depending on the extent of the tumor. Mohs surgery achieves a satisfactory outcome for noninvasive lesions with no bone involvement. For tumors with bone involvement, the treatment of choice is amputation at the level of the distal or middle phalanx, depending on the extent of the tumor.11-13 Some authors recommend performing sentinel lymph node biopsy to
detect subclinical lymphatic metastasis, as the method carries a low morbidity.\textsuperscript{14}

In conclusion, our most important recommendation regarding the management of a subungual lesion that is progressing unfavorably is to perform a suitable and timely biopsy. The aim is to make an early diagnosis, thereby avoiding, if at all possible, amputation and the associated distress.

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M. Gómez Vázquez,\textsuperscript{a,*} R. Navarra Amayuelas,\textsuperscript{a} M.T. Martin-Urda,\textsuperscript{a} C. Abellaneda Fernández,\textsuperscript{b} and G. Tapia\textsuperscript{b,c}

\textsuperscript{a}Servicio de Dermatología, Hospital Municipal de Badalona, Barcelona, Spain
\textsuperscript{b}Servicio de Anatomía Patológica, Hospital Municipal de Badalona, Barcelona, Spain
\textsuperscript{c}Servicio de Anatomía Patológica, Hospital German Trias y Pujol de Badalona, Barcelona, Spain

*Corresponding author.
E-mail address: mergova@terra.es (M. Gómez Vázquez).