The use of colposcopy in the evaluation of a patient with recurrent genital ulcers

Matsuzono T(1) Li WH(1)
(1)Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Keywords:
Behcet’s syndrome
Colposcopy
Genital ulcers

Introduction
Causes of vulvar ulcers are diverse. Behcet’s disease is a rare autoimmune cause for genital ulcers. A delay in diagnosis is not uncommon in patients with Behcet’s disease after the initial presentation leading to possible increase disease related morbidities and mortalities. Our case had demonstrated our new innovation of using colposcopy as a tool for making a diagnosis of Behcet’s disease more promptly. With effective treatment available, disease-related complications can therefore be reduced.

Objectives
Case report and literature review.

Methodology
Case report: The patient was a 40 year old lady who had been suffering from recurrent painful labial ulcers for 5 months, despite multiple consultations with general practitioners. Upon examination, there were multiple ulcers over both labia majora. Biopsy taken showed non-specific ulcers and stains for fungus, bacteria, acid fast bacilli and herpes simplex virus were all negative. As no obvious pathology was found for the non-healing ulcer, colposcopy was arranged. Upon colposcopy, there were four vaginal ulcers, and a 3cm left vulval identified. Biopsies were taken over relevant areas and histopathology results confirmed the presence of cervicitis and ulcers, with no evidence of malignancy. Upon systemic review, the patient was noted to be concomitantly suffering from recurrent mouth ulcers, as well as erythema nodosum over both shins. Based on the clinical criteria, a diagnosis of Behcet’s disease was made. The patient was then started on prednisolone, and her symptoms resolved subsequently.

Result
Case discussion: Causes of vulvar ulcers are diverse. Behçet's disease is a rare cause of genital ulceration. It is a chronic relapsing multisystem vasculitic disorder and its diagnosis is based on clinical criteria. Although literatures have not studied on the effectiveness of colposcopy in the diagnosis of Behçet's disease, colposcopy definitely has a role in the evaluation of the genital tract and to rule out malignancy. This case had successfully demonstrated the use of colposcopy in aiding us with a more detailed examination of the genital tract, and hence making a diagnosis promptly. With the assistance of colposcopy as a tool and systemic review, we are less likely to delay the diagnosis of Bechet's disease and hence improve the overall patient’s quality of life and quality of care.