Pediatric Oncall Journal

DOI: https://doi.org/10.7199/ped.oncall.2025.22

IMAGES IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

LIPSCHUTZ ULCER: A DIAGNOSIS TO KEEP IN MIND

Joana Pereira Mendes[1,2], Leonor Luz Duarte[3], Ana Cláudia Cavadas Almeida[1], Ana Brett[4,5].

[1]Pediatrics Department, Hospital Pediátrico, Centro Hospitalar e Universitário de Coimbra, Portugal,
[2]Pediatrics Department, Centro Hospitalar Universitário Cova da Beira, Covilhã, Portugal,
[3]Family Medicine Department, USF Caminho Novo, ACeS Espinho Gaia, Portugal,
[4]Emergency Department and Infectious Disease Unit, Hospital Pediátrico,
Centro Hospitalar e Universitário de Coimbra, Portugal,
[5]Clínica Universitária de Pediatria, Faculty of Medicine, Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal.

KEYWORDS

Lipschutz ulcer, genital ulceration, adolescent.

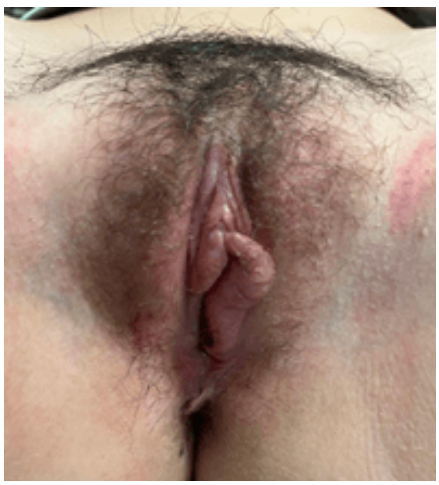
ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 24 April 2024

Accepted 02 April 2024

A previously healthy 12-year-old girl, presented to the Emergency Department with fever, sore throat and painful vulvar lesions for the past two days. She denied sexual activity. Menarche was at 10 years of age. Physical examination revealed edema and erythema of the left labia minora and an ulcerated necrotic lesion on both sides of labia minora, mimicking a "kissing pattern", 15mm in diameter, with regular and well-circumscribed margins and an overlying grey exudate (Figures 1 and 2). She also had an infracentimetric left inguinal lymphadenopathy and enlarged tonsils with exudate. Serology confirmed acute Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) infection.

Figure 1. Edema of the left labia minora.



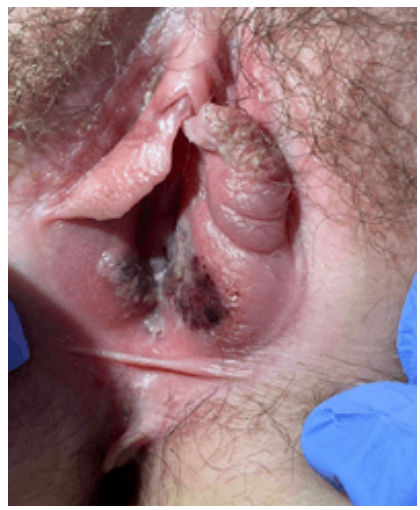
What is the diagnosis?

Lipschütz ulcer is an uncommon entity known as acute reactive genital ulcer not related to sexual intercourse, that affects mainly adolescents and young women.[1] It usually has an abrupt onset and is characterized by severe local pain and dysuria. A prodromal phase of viral symptoms such as fever, fatigue and malaise is frequent.[2]

Address for Correspondance: Joana Pereira Mendes, Alameda Pêro da Covilhã, 6200-251 Covilhã, Portugal.

Email: joanapereiramendes92@gmail.com

Figure 2. Ulcerated and necrotic lesion with a "kissing pattern" and grey exudate, typical presentation of Lipschütz ulcer.



Although its etiology and pathogenesis are still unknown, a reactive process triggered by an infection is hypothesized, due to the deposition of immune complexes in the dermal vessels, causing microthrombosis and deep, necrotizing, painful ulcers.[3] Cytomegalovirus, EBV, influenza, Salmonella and Mycoplasma have been associated with this entity. More recently, acute genital ulcers were reported following SARS-CoV-2 infection and vaccination.[4,5] Differential diagnoses include venereal ulcers (e.g. herpes simplex virus, HIV and syphilis), autoimmune diseases (e.g. Behçet's disease, Crohn's disease, pyoderma gangrenosum and vulvar pemphigoid), trauma and malignant tumors.[5,6] Diagnosis is made by exclusion. Treatment is mainly symptomatic with topical anesthetic and corticosteroids, with spontaneous cure in 2 to 6 weeks and rare recurrences.[5] With this clinical case we want to highlight the importance of considering this diagnosis, since acute genital ulcers in a young adolescent can distress both patients, families and healthcare professionals.

Compliance with ethical standards

Funding: None

Conflict of Interest: None

References:

1. Polito A, Morley C. Lipschutz Ulcers: A Rare, but Important Diagnosis in Young Females Presenting with Acute Genital Ulcerations. Pediatrics 2022; 149: 602-602.
2. Vismara SA, Lava SAG, Kottanattu L, et al. Lipschütz's acute vulvar ulcer: a systematic review. Eur J Pediatr 2020; 179: 1559-1567.
3. Koliou MG, Kakourou T, Richter J, et al. Mycoplasma pneumoniae as a cause of vulvar ulcers in a non-sexually active girl: a case report. J Med Case Rep 2017; 11: 187.
4. Hsu T, Sink JR, Alaniz VI, et al. Acute Genital Ulceration After Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 Vaccination and Infection. J Pediatr 2022; 246: 271-273.
5. Wojcicki AV, O'Flynn O'Brien KL. Vulvar Aphthous Ulcer in an Adolescent After Pfizer-BioNTech (BNT162b2) COVID-19 Vaccination. J Pediatr Adolesc Gynecol 2022; 35: 167-170.
6. Schafer F, Miranda R. Acute genital ulcers in a young girl: a clinical challenge: Lipschütz ulcer. An Bras Dermatol 2022; 97: 682-683.