**ECZEMA GANGRENOsum and SEVERe TRANSITORY NEUTROPENIA IN AN IMMUNOCOMPETENT GIRL**

Dear Editor,

Ecthyma gangrenosum (EG) is a rare cutaneous lesion, principally caused by *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, through either primary infection or hematogenous spread. Other pathogenic agents responsible have also been described, such as *Aeromonas hydrophila*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Aspergillus* spp., among others.² It generally develops in patients with sepsis or immunosuppression, in a context of hematological malignancies or immunosuppressive therapy. It presents with erythematous/violaceous or hemorrhagic lesions that evolve into a central necrotic ulcer with an erythematous halo, preferentially situated on the buttocks and legs.¹ This report presents the case of a previously healthy baby girl with genital EG and the subsequent development of a severe transitory neutropenia.

A previously healthy 17-month-old girl presented with a hemorrhagic blister on the left side of her vulva. It had started seven days before, with perilesional erythema (Fig. 1) that progressively developed ulceration and edema. There was no fever or other systemic symptoms. She was treated with oral cefpodoxime and clindamycin. As there was no improvement after 72 hours, she was hospitalized and referred to dermatology. On physical examination, the patient was in good general condition with stable hemodynamics and no fever. She had a skin ulcer on the left labia majora with a maximum diameter of 1.7 cm and well-defined borders. There was fibrin at its base, much swelling, and perilesional induration, sensitive to the touch (Fig. 2). A hemogram was carried out which showed 5,840 leukocytes/mm³, an absolute neutrophil count (ANC) of 876 mm³, and C-reactive protein of 33 mg/dL. Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests of the lesion for herpes simplex viruses 1 and 2, cytomegalovirus, varicella-zoster virus, and the Epstein-Barr virus were all negative. Blood, fung-

![Figure 1](image1.png)  
**Figure 1** Hemorrhagic blister on vulva, two days of evolution.

![Figure 2](image2.png)  
**Figure 2** Skin ulcer in labia majora, seven days of evolution.

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² Study conducted at the Department of Dermatology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Chile. Santiago, Chile.
gal, and mycobacteria cultures were all negative, but a
culture of the lesion tested positive for Pseudomonas aeru-
ginosa. An immunological study was made for lymphocytic
sub-populations, IgA-IgM-IgG immunoglobulins, neutrophil
oxidative burst test, anti-neutrophil antibodies, VDRL, and
HIV. All these were negative, thus eliminating the possibil-
ity of associated immunodeficiency. After treatment with in-
travenous ceftazidime and amikacin for six days there was a
favorable evolution, so it was decided to discharge her and
provide oral ciprofloxacin for 14 days. This resulted in
the complete resolution of the lesion. At an outpatient check-
up 72 hours after the discharge, the hemogram showed 4,800
leucocytes/mm² and an ANC of 96 mm², which improved
spontaneously after two weeks and showed no relapse after
six months on follow-up.

EG is a rare disease in healthy pediatric patients with
no associated sepsis. It generally reveals a primary sub-
clinical immunodeficiency and so it is essential to carry out
a complete immunological study on all such patients. Its
mortality is high, over 90% where there is sepsis and 15% in
the case of local infection, where neutropenia is the most
important factor for prognosis. In the literature there are
few cases of EG in previously healthy patients; the present
authors found only six which showed severe neutropenia (<
500 mm³) after the initiation of the clinical condition, as
in this report. However, all these cases showed an asso-
ciated etiological factor (respiratory infections, infantile
benign neutropenia, and hypogammaglobulinemia). Leu-
copenia induced by fluoroquinolones has been described.
This tends to be mild to moderate, being reported in
less than 0.2% of the cases, mainly in adults with co-
morbidities.5 In the present case normalization of the
hemogram occurred at the end of the second week of oral
ciprofloxacin, so this cause is not very probable. Also, it
has been suggested that Pseudomonas aeruginosa might
cause a transitory neutropenia mediated by a toxin that
could inhibit the migration of neutrophils to the affected
areas and also reduce the number of neutrophils in the
blood.6,7

This case is reported due to the exceptional manifesta-
tion of severe neutropenia after EG in an immunocompetent
patient.

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Authors’ contributions
Pablo Vargas-Mora: Approval of the final version of the
manuscript; drafting and editing of the manuscript; intel-
lectual participation in the propaedeutic and/or therapeutic
court of the studied cases; critical review of the litera-
ture; critical review of the manuscript.

Santiago García: Approval of the final version of the
manuscript; drafting and editing of the manuscript; intel-
lectual participation in the propaedeutic and/or therapeutic
court of the studied cases; critical review of the litera-
ture; critical review of the manuscript.

Ligia Aranibar: Approval of the final version of the
manuscript; drafting and editing of the manuscript; intel-
lectual participation in the propaedeutic and/or therapeutic
court of the studied cases; critical review of the manuscript.

Fernando Valenzuela: Approval of the final version of the
manuscript; drafting and editing of the manuscript; intel-
lectual participation in the propaedeutic and/or therapeutic
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Conflicts of interest
None declared.

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Pablo Vargas-Mora ID *, Santiago Garcia ID ,
Ligia Aranibar ID , Fernando Valenzuela ID

Department of Dermatology, Faculty of Medicine,
University of Chile, Santiago, Chile

* Corresponding author.
E-mail: pablovargas.med@gmail.com (P. Vargas-Mora).
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