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Herpes gladiatorum complicated with lymphangitis in a 9-year-old boy: a case report

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Introduction & Objectives:

Herpes gladiatorum usually occurs among wrestlers, football and rugby players as a result of direct contact with skin lesions caused by herpes simplex virus. Classical locations include the face, neck, and arms. It typically presents with a vesiculopustular rash on an erythematous base, similar to HSV in other locations, and may be misdiagnosed as impetigo, folliculitis, or nummular eczema. Herpetic lymphangitis is a rarely reported complication of herpetic hand infection.

Materials & Methods:

We report a rare case of Herpes gladiatorum complicated with lymphangitis in a 9-year-old wrestler, which appeared on the second day after competition.

Results:

A 9-year-old boy initially presented to our clinic with a suspected left-hand impetigo. Two days prior, he participated in a wrestling competition. Physical examination revealed a painful grouped haemorrhagic vesiculopustular rash on the left wrist and erythematous streaking on the left forearm. HSV infection was suspected, and PCR samples were obtained from an unroofed vesicle. These samples confirmed the presence of HSV type 1. After 5 days of treatment with oral Valacyclovir (500 mg bid), the lesions resolved completely.

Conclusion:

Lymphangitis is a rarely reported complication of HSV. Our report aims to increase clinicians' awareness of this possible complication and broaden the initial differential diagnosis, especially considering the atypical presentation of HSV