Reviewer’s report

Title: A complicated case of pachydermoperiostosis treated by zoledronic acid and arthroscopic synovectomy: a case report

Version: 1 Date: 28 August 2013

Reviewer: Santos Castañeda

Which of the following following best describes what type of case report this is?: An unexpected association between diseases or symptoms

Has the case been reported coherently?: Yes

Is the case report authentic?: Yes

Is the case report ethical?: Yes

Is there any missing information that you think must be added before publication?: Yes

Is this case worth reporting?: Yes

Is the case report persuasive?: Yes

Does the case report have explanatory value?: No

Does the case report have diagnostic value?: Yes

Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?: Yes

Is the anonymity of the patient protected?: Yes

Comments to authors:

The case described is interesting. However, there are some aspects that remain unclear. The patient has sufficient criteria to think that possibly has also an undifferentiated spondyloarthropathy: inflammatory pain, peripheral synovitis, very high acute phase reactants, imaging findings, positive HLA-B27. Furthermore, IgA nephropathy is also associated with SpA(s). Thus, in this case, we would have a patient with a 3 fortuitous association diseases: pachydermoperiostosis, IgA nefropathy and B27 spondyloarthritis.

Failure to respond to TNF blocking agents does not rule out a SpA because there are patients who do not respond to these agents. Moreover, it is possible that this sclerosing bone-forming phenotype of SpA is less responsive to anti-TNF biological agents than other more inflammatory phenotypes. Furthermore, the
good response to zoledronic acid does not exclude a SpA, due to there are small series, with AS in particular, showing good responses to several iv bisphosphonates. All these points should be commented in the Discussion.

Other important points:

Was sacroiliac MRI performed? What were the findings? Was Doppler signal observed in ultrasound examination? What is the prevalence of HLA B27 in the Chinese population?

Minor changes:

There are several wrong grammatics:
Page 6: 2nd line: radiographs; 10 line: response; 12th line: refractory arthritis.
Page 6: 2nd para: colchicine?; first-line drugs.
Page 7: at the end of 1st paragraph: Provide some reference to the following sentence: “The mechanism of action of bisphosphonates in HOA remains unclear but it is commonly accepted that they have both antiresorptive and anti-inflammatory benefits”.
Reference(s)
Figure legends: Fig 2: X-ray images of the hands...

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.