Reviewer's report

Title: Small lymphocytic lymphoma with florid perniosis-like features: a case report

Version: 2 Date: 26 April 2015

Reviewer: Kedar Inamdar

Reviewer's report:

Major Revisions:

The authors describe an unusual cutaneous presentation of a low-grade CD5+ B-cell non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) in a patient with previously diagnosed small lymphocytic lymphoma. The authors do a good and systematic review of dermatologic conditions associated with CLL/SLL, the differential diagnoses of primary versus secondary cutaneous B-cell NHLs and the incidence of histologic progression of CLL/SLL to large B-cell lymphoma (Richter transformation).

The authors should clarify the following issues with regards to the diagnosis -

1. Authors should elaborate on the work-up of original diagnosis which led to the conclusion that this was indeed SLL. To that effect, provide information on which diagnostic modalities were used to establish the diagnosis. Was flow cytometry performed? Was cytogenetics done? The International Workgroup on CLL definition of SLL requires a. Lymphadenopathy b. no cytopenias due to bone marrow infiltration and c. <5000/μL peripheral blood B-cells. In the course of this patient's disease, there is no mention of patient having developed any lymphadenopathy. So how did the original diagnosis meet criteria for SLL?

2. While cyclin D1 is negative and excludes a classic mantle cell lymphoma, how was the possibility of cyclin D1 negative mantle cell lymphoma ruled out. This is particularly important to exclude considering the unusual presentation of SLL in this patient and the lack of CD23 expression by the neoplastic lymphoid cells.

3. Lymphomas other than CLL/SLL or mantle cell lymphoma can aberrantly express CD5 particularly marginal zone lymphoma, lymphoplasmacytic lymphoma follicular lymphoma. While follicular lymphoma is excluded, how were other entities excluded from differential diagnosis?

Minor essential revisions -

None

Discretionary revisions -

It would be helpful to add a figure of CD3 and CD23 immunostains if available.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.