

Unusual Complication of Breast Reconstruction by Prosthesis: Spider Bite by *Loxosceles Rufescens*

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Abbreviations: IBR: Implant-Based Breast Reconstruction

Although predominantly safe and uncomplicated, the post operative course of implant-based breast reconstruction (IBR) may be challenging if infection supervenes. It becomes an anatomical, aesthetic and psychological disaster if removal of the implant is required.

Hopefully, if we can say so, there is other causes of fever and pain in the patients operated on for reconstruction by prosthesis.

We report the unusual case of a woman, born in 1944 (77 years of age at presentation) treated for a bilateral breast cancer. A right mastectomy had been undertaken in 2005 for extended intraductal cancer with an immediate IBR.

A contra-lateral, triple-negative malignancy was diagnosed in 2012 and treated with neo-adjuvant chemotherapy (Taxol Carboplatine), followed one month after termination of chemotherapy by a mastectomy with an axillary dissection. No radiotherapy was performed due to an histopathologically-confirmed complete pathological response. A further immediate reconstruction occurred and the post operative follow-up was uneventful. She was followed regularly every 6 months.

In May 2022 ultrasonography demonstrated a local skin recurrence proven by biopsy, which was treated by a wide local excision and implant exchange in June 2022. The initial post operative course was again uneventful and radiotherapy

to the left thoracic wall was planned.

Unfortunately, before this was commenced, the patient presented as an emergency with a pyrexia of 39°, chills and severe pain in the left breast. Clinical examination was unremarkable, with neither erythema nor swelling or enlarged axillary node. Ultrasonography demonstrated a small seroma calculated at 5ml which was aspirated and showed no bacterial growth. In the absence of obvious infection of the prosthesis we enquired into other causes of infection, keeping in mind a possible subclinical/indolent infection due to the repeated surgeries.

After extended questioning the patient reported she had recently cleaned the attic of her country house and have sustained a bite on the left shoulder from a spider. Closer examination of her left posterior shoulder revealed 4 small, black crusty lesions, compatible with this spider bite.

The patient was duly treated with wide spectrum antibiotics, anti-histaminics and prednisolone and made a rapid recovery within 8 days. Was a *Loxosceles* bite formally diagnosed.

The literature reveals that *Loxosceles rufescens* bites are resident in attics of old houses and are known to be responsible for pain, fever and eventually local necrosis. The size of this spider is 8-9 mm according to its gender. Brown *Loxosceles rufescens* have six pairs of eyes: three pairs forming an half circle. When the spider is adult a spot, in violin form, appears

on its abdomen. (See picture) It's French name "recluse brune" arises from its colour that passes from deep yellow to brown and a

preference solitude in unfrequented attics or basements [1].



Loxosceles rufescens

Hopefully our patient didn't have the evolution of the « stranger things » season 4 actors [2], nor the cases reported during the movie production of the western « rust » when a technician nearly lost his arm, as well as a french farmer, in the east of France more recently [3].

The literature reveals that *Loxosceles rufescens* (cf picture) are resident in attics of old houses and that their bites are known to be responsible for pain, fever and eventually local necrosis. *L. rufescens* bites to humans is reported in 38 publications of which only 11 publications refer to 12 verified spider bites (11% of the reported bites) [4]. Acute hemolytic anemia has been reported in children due to the venom [5] J Time to complete healing ranged from 14 days to more than 8 weeks (mean, 4.8 weeks). A marked relationship was found between age, comorbidities, lesion severity and time to complete healing ($P < 0.01$) [6].

Conclusion

Plastic surgeons involved in Breast reconstruction can face unusual situations without relationship with there surgical procedures, and facing clinical discrepancies should extend their research toward external causes.

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