ABSTRACT

Authors: Mia Demant, Iselin Saltvig, Jørgen Hesselfeldt
Institution: Department of Plastic Surgery and Breast Surgery, Zealand University Hospital, Roskilde, Denmark
Titel: Don't judge a tumor by its biopsy! A case report

Introduction. Trichoblastomas are rare, benign hair-germ tumors, that can mimic the basal cell carcinoma (BCC). They usually arise on the head or neck and they have a potential for malignant transformation.

Presentation of case. We report a case of a large trichoblastoma in the forehead of a 75-year old otherwise healthy woman. Since the age of 20 she had had a bulge in the forehead, in which a superficial-looking wound had now developed. Initially a dermatologist biopsied the tumor suspecting a BCC, which the histological analyses confirmed. The patient was then referred to the Department of Plastic Surgery for complete excision of the carcinoma. Surprisingly, the concluding pathology report had now changed the diagnosis from a BCC to a trichoblastoma. It was re-excised to achieve negative margins. 6 months after surgery, the patient is still well with no clinical signs of relapse.

Discussion. Current management of most skin lesions relies on the histopathological subtype of a single punch biopsy. Many benign and malignant dermatological entities may mimic the BCC and therefore, misdiagnosis can lead to either unnecessary excision or delayed treatment of metastatic disease. Mimics may include various types of nonneoplastic processes, benign adnexal tumors, including the trichoblastoma, or cutaneous carcinomas with basaloid features.

Conclusion. A single punch biopsy might not always be adequate in making the correct diagnosis. Although it is considered the golden standard - and a powerful tool - the clinical assessment can be just as important. Due to its potential for malignant transformation, it is recommended to excise the benign trichoblastoma with negative margins.

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