

Clinical Quiz

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Beaus lines

Clinical Presentation

A 25-year-old Yemeni male diagnosed as acute myeloid leukemia (M2 [as FAB classification]), received doxorubicin plus cytosine arabinoside protocol. After 3 cycles of chemotherapy (2 inductions and one consolidation), he noticed abnormalities in his nails (Figure 1).



Figure 1.

Questions

1. What is the name given for these lines?
2. What is the cause of such lines?
3. Mention other causes of these lines.

Clinical Quiz

Answers

1. Beau's lines.
2. Chemotherapy.
3. Transverse grooves or lines seen on fingernails following an exhausting disease, usually is a sign of systemic disease. These may be due to trauma, chemotherapy,¹ coronary occlusion, hypocalcemia, or skin disease. The lines are visible until the affected area of the nail has grown out and trimmed. It is normally seen in infants up to the end of the first month of life.

Discussion

Beau's lines are deep grooved lines that run from side to side on the fingernail. They may look like indentations or ridges in the nail plate. There are several reasons why humans get Beau's lines. It is believed that there is a temporary cessation of cell division in the nail matrix caused by an infection or problem in the nail fold, where the nail begins to form, or it may be caused by an injury to that area. Some other reasons for these lines include trauma, coronary occlusion, hypocalcemia, skin disease, or a sign of systemic disease. It may also be caused by an illness of the body such as diabetes, certain drugs such as those used in chemotherapy, or even malnutrition. This condition of the nail was named by a French physician, Joseph Honoré Simon Beau, who first described it in 1846.²

References

1. Holzberg, M. Nail signs of systemic disease. In: Atlas of hair and nails. Hodinsky MK, Sawaya ME, Scher RK, editors. Philadelphia (PA): Churchill Livingstone; 2002. p. 59.
2. Definition of Beau's lines. Available from: URL: <http://www.medicinenet.com>