Growing fatty mass in the back: diagnosis of a multiple symmetric lipomatosis (Madelung's disease) in association with chronic alcoholism

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Part 1: question

Growing fatty mass in the back.

A 50-year-old man with chronic alcoholism was referred with clinical signs of a slowly growing fatty

mass in the back developing over the previous 3 years (Fig. 1). Additional fatty tumors were noted in the neck (Figs. 2a, b), and in the upper parts of the arms and the thighs (Fig. 3a, b). Cytology results showed no signs of malignancy (Fig. 4).

The diagnosis can be found at doi:10.1007/s00256-011-1280-6.

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Fig. 1 A 20×20 cm mass is visible in the lower back (*arrows*). The mass had no secondary signs of inflammation, was soft on palpation and subjectively painless and non-tender. Additional tumors can be clearly seen around the elbow (*curved arrows*)

Fig. 2 **a** Axial T2-weighted sequence from a whole-body MRI shows subcutaneous fatty infiltration (*arrow*) in the right dorsal neck. **b** Photograph corresponding to **a**, showing the mass (*arrow*)

Fig. 4 Aspiration cytology from the fatty mass in the dorsal neck showed normal fatty tissue without any signs of malignancy with abundant normal lipoid cells (*arrow*). (Original magnification $\times 100$, Papanicolaou stain)

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Fig. 3 In this T1 sequence, there is diffuse subcutaneous fatty infiltration in the thigh, especially on the right side (*arrow*)