

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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Transient yellow discoloration of the nails for differential diagnosis with yellow nail syndrome

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Abstract

A differential diagnosis must be made between transient yellow discoloration of the nails and yellow nail syndrome. We highlight some practical aspects of yellow nail discoloration.

Keywords: Yellow nail syndrome, Yellow discoloration, Nail

Sir,

We read with great interest the article by Vignes et al. recently published by the journal [1].

We would like to add some practical issues related to differential diagnosis of yellow nail discoloration.

A differential diagnosis must be made between transient yellow discoloration of the nails and yellow nail syndrome.

Yellow discoloration of the nails has been reported as an adverse reaction after some drugs such as: quinaqrine used for cutaneous lupus erythematosus [2], after topical use of 5-fluorouracil for the treatment of nail psoriasis (Fig. 1) [3], temsirolimus [4], or bucillamine for rheumatoid arthritis [5], retinoids [6] (Fig. 2). Furthermore, yellow discoloration of the nails has been described during hemodialysis [7], in patients diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma [8]. Yellow nails can be also observed in patients diagnosed with diabetes mellitus (Fig. 3a, b) [9], tobacco-associated use (Fig. 4), or after intense use of nail polish remover (Fig. 5). In recent years, skin adverse reactions induced by cetuximab have been lately reported; cetuximab is a monoclonal antibody against epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) used in the treatment of colorectal cancer [10]. Recently, yellowish distal discoloration was observed in our department in a 67-year-old female patient treated with cetuximab for colorectal cancer (Fig. 6).

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Availability of data and materials

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Authors' contributions

AC contributed to the management of the patients, the conception of the work and the analysis of data. AN drafted the work, contributed to the proofreading and revising the manuscript. CP contributed to the management of the patients and has been involved in revising the manuscript critically for important intellectual content. SS contributed to the conception of the work and gave final approval of the version to be published. All Authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

All the patients consented to the publishing of the photos containing non-identifiable images.

Consent for publication

All the patients consented to the publishing of the photos containing non-identifiable images.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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Fig. 1 Diffuse yellow discoloration of the nail plate in a case of nail psoriasis treated with topical 5-fluorouracil (close view)



Fig. 4 Tobacco associated yellow nails



Fig. 2 Yellowish discoloration of finger nails in a teenager while treated with systemic isotretinoin for acne



Fig. 5 Transient yellow discoloration as a result of nail polish remover (acetone)

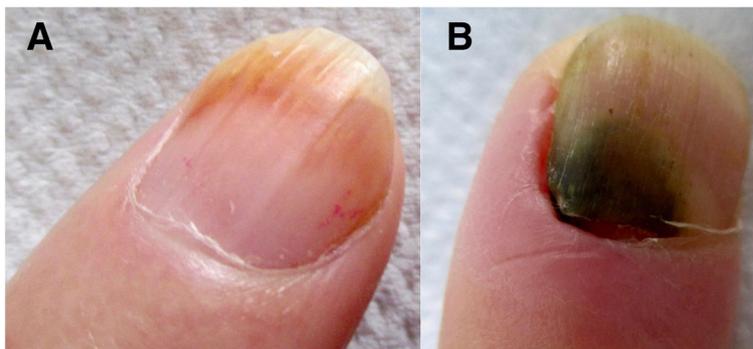


Fig. 3 "Diabetic yellow nails" (a) and yellow-green discoloration of a nail in a diabetic patient due to *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infection (b)



Fig. 6 Distal *yellowish* discoloration of the nail during treatment with cetuximab

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