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Subungual Bowen disease. Complete remission 14 years post-photodynamic therapy (PDT)

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Title Page

Title: Subungual Bowen's disease. Complete remission 14 years post PDT

Short running title: Subungual Bowen's disease

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Article type : Correspondence Letter

Letter to the Editor

Subungual Bowen's disease. Complete remission 14 years post PDT.

Dear Sir,

In 2004 we reported the first case of biopsy-proven subungual Bowen's disease, successfully treated with photodynamic therapy (Tan, Sinclair, & Foley, 2004) . We now report long-term follow-up of this gentleman who remains in complete remission 14 years later.

The patient was a police shooting instructor and the Bowen's disease affected his trigger finger. Standard treatment in 2004 was distal amputation of the digit. In view of his occupation he was keen to explore non-surgical alternatives.

After partial nail avulsion and a course of a keratolytic pretreatment (20% salicylic acid in white soft paraffin), the area was photosensitized with 20% 5-amino-levulinic acid (5-ALA) oil in water emulsion applied under occlusion for four hours. Omnilux 630nm was used as the light source, delivering a dose of 63 J/cm². Three treatments were given, two weeks apart and then a fourth treatment was given four weeks later. The patient achieved complete clinical remission and repeat biopsy at 6 months post-treatment confirmed histological remission. He was followed up for 2 years and then discharged from the clinic.

The patient re-presented to our clinic fourteen years later for an unrelated matter. Examination of the trigger finger, (figure 1), showed no evidence of recurrence of the Bowen's disease. He has continued to work in the police force as a shooting instructor.

A second patient with biopsy proven subungual Bowen's disease of the thumb, also treated successfully with PDT, also remains in complete remission 16 years later (figure 2).

PDT, at least in these 2 patients, offers a potentially curative, non-surgical alternative to digital amputation in the management of subungual Bowen's disease.

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Figure Legend:

Figure 1 - Patient 1 (A) Prior to PDT treatment of the right index finger, (B) Prior to PDT treatment, (C) 6 months post-PDT, (D) 14 years post-PDT

Figure 2 - Patient 2, 16 years post-PDT treatment of the right thumb

Bibliography



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