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Clinical image

Infectious mononucleosis skin rash without previous antibiotic use



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A 20-year-old female patient presented with fever, pharyngitis and lymphadenopathy. The diagnosis of infectious mononucleosis was established by high levels of IgM antibodies against the Epstein–Barr virus. Fifteen days after the onset of symptoms she developed a maculopapular generalized rash (Fig. 1), which resolved within a few days, without any special treatment. She had not received antibiotics or any other drug.

Patients with infectious mononucleosis may present with a non pruritic, faint rash during the course of the

disease, which is believed to be caused directly by the virus. This is in contrast with the rash observed in patients who received beta-lactam antibiotics, mainly ampicillin or amoxicillin, which is associated with a hypersensitivity reaction to the antibiotic¹ and it is usually pruritic and prolonged. Other, less common, skin manifestations of infectious mononucleosis include, among others, erythema nodosum, erythema multiforme, and urticaria.² Our patient completely recovered within 3 months, with no complications.



Fig. 1 – Maculopapular generalized rash on patient's back.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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