

## **SOFT TISSUE INFECTION CAUSED BY MYCOBACTERIUM FORTUITUM: A CASE REPORT**

Z. Psaroudaki<sup>1</sup>, A. Argyropoulou<sup>1</sup>, V. Papastamopoulos<sup>2</sup>, E. Platsouka<sup>1</sup>, K. Hatsiou<sup>1</sup>, S. Constantoulaki<sup>1</sup>, S. Nikolaou<sup>3</sup>, S. Kanavaki<sup>3</sup>, A. Skoutelis<sup>2</sup>, O. Paniara<sup>1</sup>

Department of Clinical Microbiology<sup>1</sup>, Infectious Diseases and HIV Department<sup>2</sup> "Evangelismos Hospital" and National Mycobacterium Reference Center<sup>3</sup>, Athens, Greece

**Purpose of the study:** Diseases due to rapidly growing mycobacteria (RGM) are rare. The RGM may cause abscess formation in immunocompetent patients particularly after injury. We present a case of *Mycobacterium fortuitum* abscess in a young man, without injury.

**Case report:** A 25-year-old man presented with a painful abscess and purulent discharge on the left axilla. At clinical examination axillary lymphadenitis was noticed. Culture of the purulent specimen revealed methicillin susceptible *Staphylococcus epidermidis*. The patient was treated with amoxicillin-clavulanate for 10 days. Despite the therapy the abscess progressed and surgical drainage was performed. Pus and tissue samples were sent for culture and biopsy. Gram stain and acid-fast stain were negative. The culture for mycobacteria in the system BACTEC MGIT 960 yielded a rapid growing mycobacterium at the second day of incubation. The strain was identified by reverse hybridization as *M. fortuitum*. Susceptibility testing showed that the isolate was sensitive to ciprofloxacin, ofloxacin, levofloxacin, gentamicin, imipenem and meropenem. The patient was successfully treated with ciprofloxacin for 2 months. Three years later no recurrence observed.

**Conclusion:** Infection due to RGM, especially *M. fortuitum*, should be considered in the case of soft tissue abscesses with no clinical response to antibiotic treatment. The specimens must be cultured to the appropriate media to recover the responsible pathogen. A high degree of skepticism is required for diagnosis and appropriate treatment initiation.