

An irregularly pigmented lesion on the chest

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The diagnosis of pigmented lesions is a daily challenge in general practice. Dermatoscopy can provide extra clues, but requires significant expertise. This series will help you hone your skills.

Case presentation

Over a 12-month period, a 75-year-old man developed an irregular pigmented lesion, measuring 4 mm in diameter, on his anterior chest (Figure 1). Dermatoscopy revealed an asymmetrical lesion with an irregular light brown to dark brown network and a black homogeneous area with dark globules (Figure 2). Excision biopsy showed an epidermis with a well formed pigmented rete ridge system containing increased melanocytes and isolated nests (Figure 3). The upper dermis showed focal lymphocytic inflammation and pigment deposits.

Diagnosis

The final diagnosis was a lentiginous junctional naevus.

Discussion

New pigmented lesions in elderly sun-damaged skin may be a challenge to diagnosis, both clinically and with the dermatoscope. The asymmetrical appearance, irregular network, uneven colour, globules and homogeneous dark area prompted removal of this lesion. The excision biopsy in this case revealed a rete ridge system that is identical to that seen in solar lentigines, but the addition of nests and increased melanocytes at the junction indicated that this was an evolving lentiginous junctional naevus.

Newly acquired junctional naevi in the elderly may gradually increase in size and develop increasingly atypical clinical, dermatoscopic and histological features that merge with those of lentigo maligna.

Keypoint

Lentiginous naevi in the elderly may have atypical dermatoscopic features and may require biopsy to exclude transition to melanoma.

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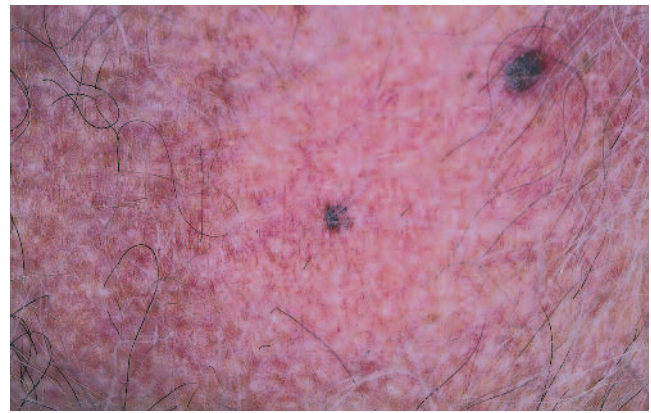


Figure 1. Asymmetrical pigmented lesion on the patient's chest.

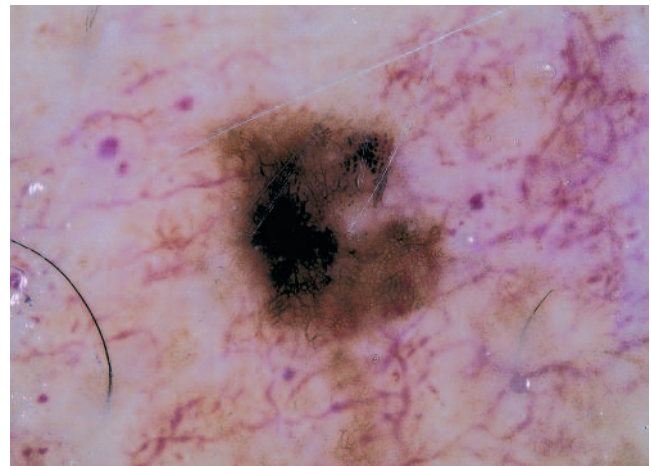


Figure 2. Dermatoscopy demonstrating an irregular pigment network with a dark homogeneous area and globules at the top of the crescent-shaped lesion.

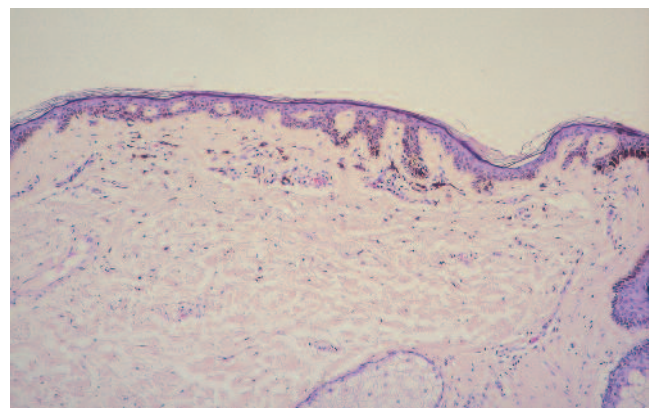


Figure 3. Excision biopsy demonstrating broad pigmented rete ridges with nests of melanocytes at their tips, as well as pigment in the upper dermis.