Leucotrichia in Discoid Lupus erythematosus

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Sir,

The clinical features of discoid lupus erythematosus are quite distinct. The lesions consist of well-defined erythematous slightly infiltrated discoid patches that often show adherent thick scales and follicular plugging. In old lesions, there is often atrophic scarring associated with varying degrees of depigmentation and hyperpigmentation. The hyperpigmentation is usually more prominent at the periphery, and the lesions may occasionally be verrucous. The hair in the affected patches, especially on the scalp, is lost as the infiltrate impinges upon the pilosebaceous structures and causes their gradual atrophy and disappearance.

We recently had the opportunity of seeing 3 patients with classical clinical and histo-pathological features of discoid lupus erythematosus in whom the discoid patches showed

leucotrichia. The hair on the unaffected skin was of normal colour (dark). The patients were in the age group of 25-30 years and had no personal or family history of vitiligo. The lesions of discoid lupus erythematosus which showed leucotrichia had depigmentation as a prominent feature besides erythema, infiltration and adherent thick scales and were situated on the chest and arms.

The pathogenetic mechanism of leucotrichia is quite clear, it being due to destruction of melanocytes in the hair bulb by the infiltrate. However, it has not been mentioned as a clinical sign in lesions of discoid lupus erythematosus in any of the standard texts available on dermatology. We would like to share this clinical observation of ours with others in the field.