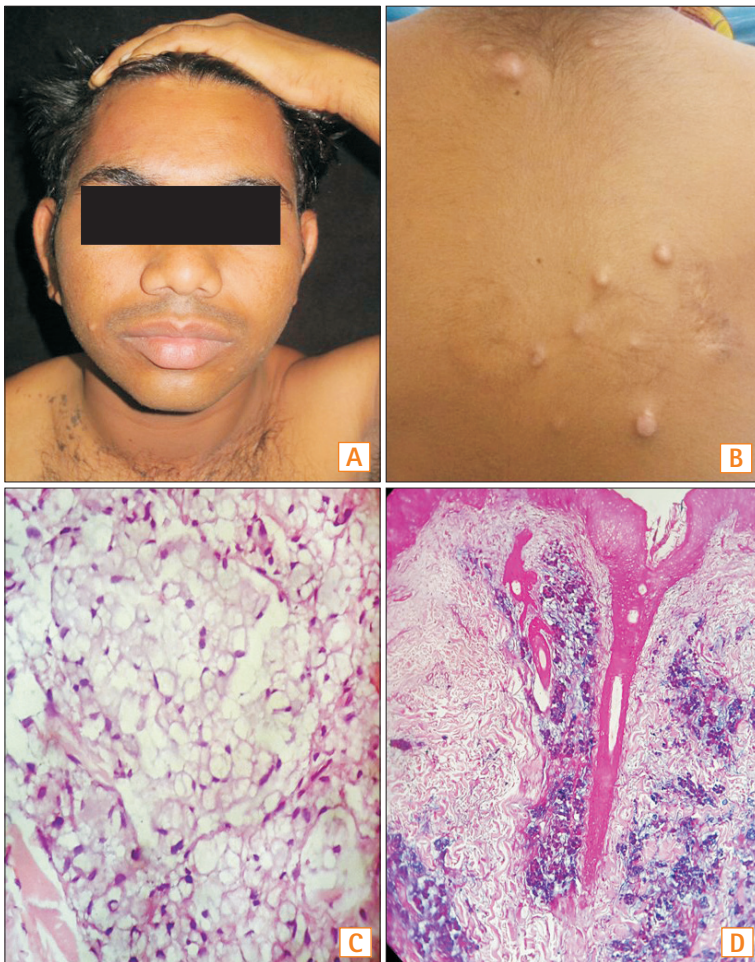




Cutaneous lesions in colorectal carcinoma: a rare presentation

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Question: A 23-year-old man had multiple nodular painless lesions all over his body since 2 months. He had undergone emergency colostomy 1 year previously for intestinal obstruction due to an ulceroinfiltrative mass in the descending colon. Histopathology showed a mucinous adenocarcinoma (signet-ring type). The patient underwent left hemi-colectomy and received 6 sessions of 5-fluorouracil- and oxaliplatin-based adjuvant chemotherapy for the tumor (T3N2M0).

On physical examination, the patient was pale and had firm-to-hard non-tender nodules of varying sizes over the scalp, face, abdomen, back, and arms (Fig. A, B); the maximum nodule size was 8×8 mm. On microscopic examination, the nodules showed a basket-weave pattern of the stratum corneum, with follicular plugging and increased basal layer melanization. The dermis was infiltrated, showing a narrow green zone and foamy cells with a mucin-like substance (Fig. C, D; alcian blue staining, C: ×40, D: ×10). Imaging did not show any metastatic lesions in the liver or lungs.

What is the diagnosis for this lesion?

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Answer to the Images: Cutaneous Metastases in Colorectal Carcinoma

The above findings confirmed a metastatic focus of the mucinous colon adenocarcinoma. Cutaneous metastases in colorectal carcinoma are rare, occurring in 2.3%–6.0% of cases.¹ The most frequent site of cutaneous metastases of colon cancer is the abdomen with an operative scar, with the scalp, face, arms, and genitalia being uncommon sites.¹ On macroscopic observation, lesions appear as painless, firm nodules or purple-red indurations termed as carcinoma erysipeloides, or they may be mistaken as lipomas or neurofibromas.² The microscopic features of metastatic lesions resemble those of the primary tumor. Skin metastases are a poor prognostic indicator of colon cancer, and patients survive for an average of 18 months.³ No clear guidelines exist regarding the optimum chemotherapeutic regimens. The patient reported herein died of disseminated malignancy and anemia within 1 week of hospital admission.

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