

Is herpes zoster being an indicator for COVID 19 infection?

Running title: herpes zoster and COVID 19

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Dear editor

It is recognized that the majority of the infections with COVID-19 presented with mild and moderate symptoms, however, the minority (15%) of the infections can progress to severe pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), or can progress to multiple organ failure[1]. Morbilliform rashes, chicken-pox like lesions, covid toe and a various lesions were the main skin manifestations reported during COVID 19 epidemics [2]. There are recent reports on cases of herpes zoster infections among a symptomatic COVID-19 infection[3,4]. Therefore, identifying or to raise the suspicion of the asymptomatic carriers is of paramount in the management of COVID-19 outbreak.

The plausible explanation for the herpes zoster infections among a symptomatic COVID-19 infections is the lymphopenia (which can favour herpes virus recurrences) which is a result of infecting lymphocytes and activation-induced cell death and impairment to antiviral responses [5]. Therefore, the point of herpes zoster infections among a symptomatic COVID-19 infection should be put in mind when a broad immunosuppression is used in patients with severe viral illness and the pros and cons of anti-inflammatory effects versus the delay of virus clearance [6].

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