

Nonerosive Metacarpophalangeal Arthritides in a Patient with Dermatomyositis

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Carpal and metacarpal arthralgias and benign arthritides are frequently observed in patients with polymyositis/dermatomyositis¹⁻³. However, due to the nondestructive cause of the disease, a detailed radiographic analysis is usually not part of the diagnostic procedure. We describe a 21-year-old female patient with longterm (> 3 years) dermatomyositis who was hospitalized because of acute swelling of the right arm.

To examine the swelling's cause, arterial and venous

angiography was performed. Venous angiography (not shown) revealed a venous thrombosis of the right subclavian vein based on a previously unobserved bilateral thoracic outlet syndrome that was not affecting the arterial perfusion. Most interestingly, when evaluating the arterial angiography, a strong enhancement of the periarticular perfusion, especially of the metacarpophalangeal (MCP) joints (inset, Figure 1), was noted, illustrating the present arthritides associated with dermatomyositis.

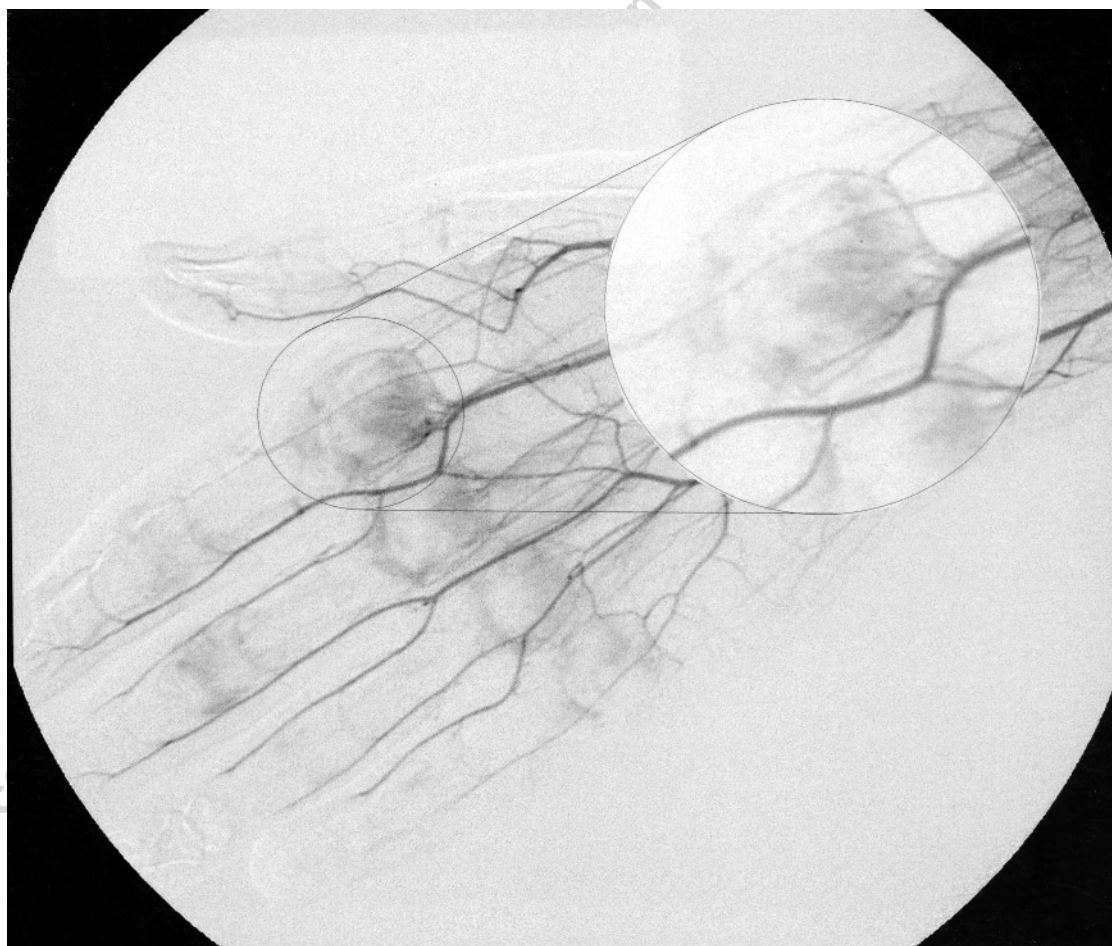


Figure 1. Arterial angiography of the right arm and hand showing an enhanced perfusion around the MCP joints indicating arthritides.

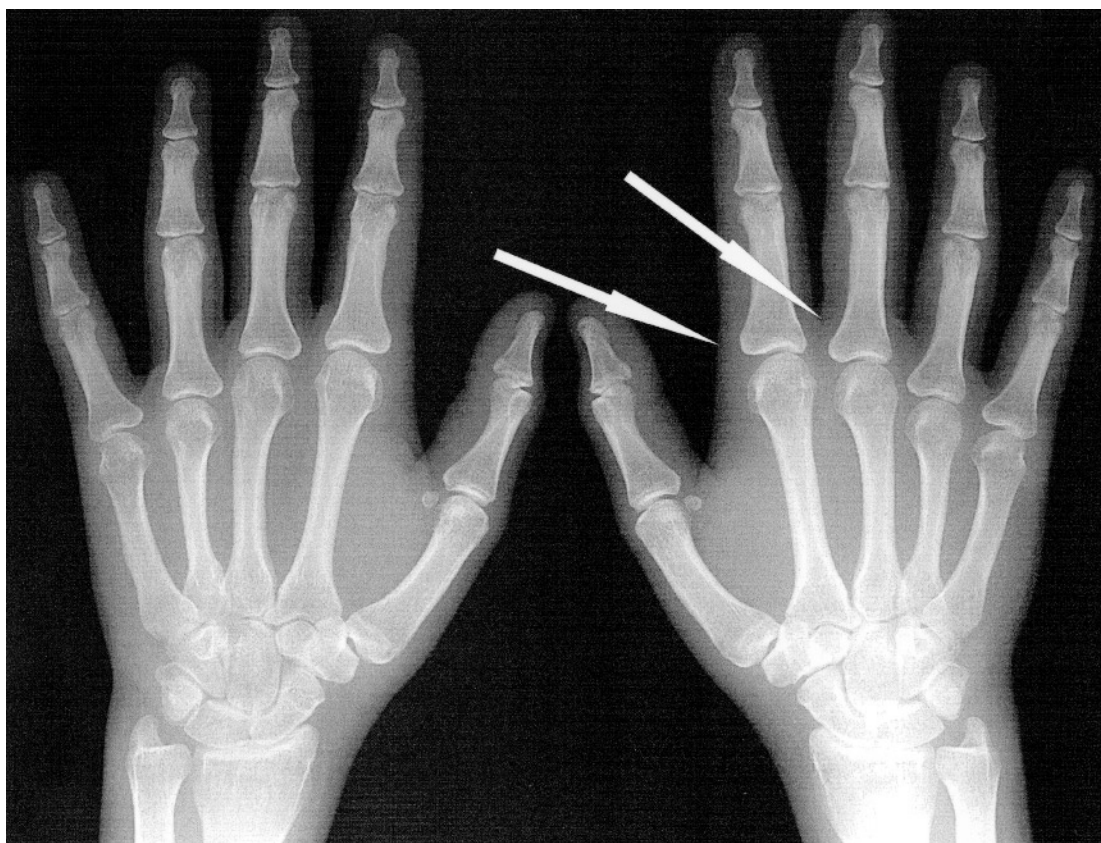


Figure 2. Native radiographs of both hands showing only mild soft tissue swelling around MCP II and III, but no significant erosive articular changes.

At the time the image was recorded, the patient had continuous mild to moderate arthralgias, swelling, and tenderness of the MCP joints. Conventional radiographs of both hands showed only mild periarticular soft tissue swelling, yet did not reveal any erosive articular changes (Figure 2), which is in accord with the nondestructive character of arthritides associated with dermatomyositis¹.

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