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Malignancy arising in de-pigmented skin: a report of 2 cases

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Introduction: Non melanoma skin cancer is not uncommon in the Asian skin. Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and cutaneous lymphomas are included in this group. There is evidence that excessive exposure of fair, white skin to natural sunlight leads to higher risk of non melanoma skin cancer. Similarly, certain depigmenting conditions may predispose the Asian skin to increased incidence of malignancy. We report two patients with underlying vitiligo and albinism presenting with squamous cell carcinoma.

Case report: Case 1; 72 year old female with long standing vitiligo presented with raised, ulcerated lesions in the dorsa of her depigmented hands. She was a rubber tapper exposing her unprotected skin to sunlight. Skin biopsy from two lesions confirmed early SCC. She was referred to the oncological surgeon for further management. Case 2; A 25 year old male with albinism presented with a non healing ulcer in the right infra clavicular region for one year. He was a helper in a service station, who had never used sun protection measures. On examination there was an erythematous fungating growth with a serous discharge. There were several hyperkeratotic lesions in the surrounding skin. An incisional biopsy was suggestive of SCC. He was referred to the oncological surgeon.

Discussion: These cases highlight the importance of risk of malignancy in persons with depigmenting disorders and the need to educate them on sun protection measures and early treatment of hyperkeratotic lesions.

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Do you have this" lucky" indoor plant? A case history of plant poisoning in a 3 year old child

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Introduction: People prefer to have various indoor plants especially if a plant is considered as a "lucky plant". This is a report of a case of plant poisoning due to such a "lucky" indoor plant.

Case report: A 3 year old girl presented with acute onset burning pain of the mouth, swollen lips and tongue and drooling of saliva. She is previously healthy and developmentally normal and was playing on her own inside the house. She suddenly started crying, with burning pain of the mouth. Prior to this event she has bitten some leaves broken from one of the indoor plants. On examination her mouth was red with swollen lips. Rest of the examination was normal. The concerned plant was brought in, which is called "Zamia" by the plant lovers. She was treated symptomatically and recovered completely and discharged.

Discussion: Zamia or Zee Zee (*Zamioculcas zamiifolia*) is a popular indoor plant in Sri Lanka and considered as a lucky plant. It contains a high concentration of calcium oxalate in its stem and leaves. Calcium oxalate is one of the reported toxic substances associated with plants. These needle like crystals produce severe pain and oedema when contact with lips, tongue, oral mucosa, conjunctiva or skin which is self-limiting. General public should be aware of the poisonous plants they keep as indoor lucky plants.



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