

Connor J. Robin

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LSU Health Sciences Center, New Orleans, LA

Mentor's Name: Elyse Stevens, MD

Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine at LSUHSC – New Orleans

“A Rare Presentation of Scurvy in a Well-Nourished Patient”

Vitamin C deficiency, otherwise known as scurvy, is a rare diagnosis among populations with adequate nutritional resources. We present a 37-year-old female patient with bilateral lower extremity edema, episodic anasarca, petechiae, and easy bruising who was diagnosed with scurvy. Given the clinical presentation, a broad differential was investigated with no findings suggestive of hematologic or cardiovascular pathology. Initial laboratory studies were unremarkable. Progression of cutaneous symptoms and subsequent laboratory findings demonstrating low vitamin C levels supported a diagnosis of scurvy. Classical symptoms of scurvy include mucocutaneous petechiae, poor wound healing, ecchymosis, hyperkeratosis, corkscrew hair, gingival swelling, and bleeding gums. Following standard enteral supplementation of vitamin C, repeat vitamin C levels failed to adequately respond with the patient remaining to be symptomatic. Given a lack of insufficient nutritional intake or known systemic illness, gastrointestinal malabsorptive etiology was suspected. Though rare in the United States, scurvy should be considered in patients with manifestations of a bleeding disorder. A gastrointestinal workup may be indicated if other nutritional deficiencies are identified, or a source of inadequate intake cannot be established.