
Neurology Publish Ahead of Print

DOI: 10.1212/WNL.000000000206743

Complicated Monkeypox Infection in a Patient With Multiple Sclerosis and Fingolimod Treatment

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Neurology[®] Published Ahead of Print articles have been peer reviewed and accepted for publication. This manuscript will be published in its final form after copyediting, page composition, and review of proofs. Errors that could affect the content may be corrected during these processes.

Contributions:

Leonie Müller-Jensen: Drafting/revision of the manuscript for content, including medical writing for content; Major role in the acquisition of data; Study concept or design; Analysis or interpretation of data

Helene Kriedemann: Drafting/revision of the manuscript for content, including medical writing for content; Major role in the acquisition of data; Study concept or design; Analysis or interpretation of data

Kerstin Anvari: Major role in the acquisition of data

Petra Huehnchen: Study concept or design; Analysis or interpretation of data

Volker Siffrin: Drafting/revision of the manuscript for content, including medical writing for content; Study concept or design; Analysis or interpretation of data

Figure Count:

1

Table Count:

0

Search Terms:

[14] All Clinical Neurology, [41] Multiple sclerosis, [135] All Infections, 4. Sphingosine-1-phosphate receptor (S1PR) modulator

Acknowledgment:**Study Funding:**

The authors report no targeted funding

Disclosures:

The authors do not report any disclosures.

Preprint DOI:**Received Date:**

2022-08-27

Accepted Date:

2022-11-15

Handling Editor Statement:

Submitted and editor reviewed. The handling editor was Editor-in-Chief José G. Merino, MD, MPhil, FAHA, FAAN

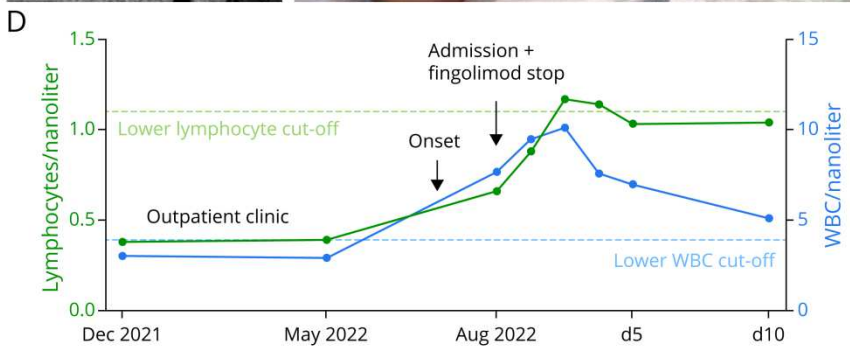
A 46-year old man with controlled relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis (MS) and long-term fingolimod treatment developed multiple painful skin lesions (Figure 1A). Outpatient skin swab revealed monkeypox virus infection. No fever was detected, but the disease course was complicated by prolonged cutaneous, oral and perianal manifestations, proctitis (Figure 1B), gastrointestinal bleeding with the need for blood transfusions, lower leg phlegmon (Figure 1C), lymphadenopathy and hyperbilirubinemia. Further, the patient presented acute urinary retention and hematuria.

At admission, moderate lymphopenia (Figure 1D) was detected and fingolimod was stopped. Six days after discontinuation, flow cytometry still revealed severe T-cell lymphopenia (0.67/nl; CD4+ 0.24/nl). Nevertheless, the patient improved with supportive treatment and was released 35 days after symptom onset.

Fingolimod-induced lymphopenia is a risk factor for severe monkeypox infection. As monkeypox was recently declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, vaccination should be evaluated in MS patients before immunosuppressive treatment, in particular in patients receiving sphingosine-1-phosphate receptor modulators.^{1,2}

Figure 1. Clinical presentation and laboratory results of a MS patient with monkeypox.

(A) Monkeypox rash with approximately 180 skin lesions. (B) Abdominal CT reveals proctitis with perirectal fat stranding (arrows). (C) Bacterial superinfection manifested as lower leg phlegmon. (D) Patient showed pre-infection lymphopenia and leucopenia. After symptom onset and fingolimod discontinuation, white blood cells (WBC) increased rapidly. d = day of hospitalization.



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Leonie Müller-Jensen, Helene Kriedemann, Kerstin Anvari, et al.
Neurology published online December 20, 2022
DOI 10.1212/WNL.0000000000206743

This information is current as of December 20, 2022

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