

CARTA AO EDITOR

PROBABLE PODOCONIOSIS IN BRASILIA

We have seen a number of such cases as the one reported below from this area of Central Brazil where Bancroftian filariasis does not exist it being restricted to coastal urban localities¹. Price² in his book predicted its presence on the eroded high plateau of Brazil where arinaceous Laterite soils similar to Africa are the rule. He cites a report from São Paulo (unfortunately not referenced) where silicon and aluminium were found in the femoral lymph nodes of two cases of elephantiasis. We briefly describe a recent patient below.

The patient I.P.B. (REG 014230) is a 22 year old male who has worked as a subsistence farmer only in Central Brazil always bare foot. Ten months ago he developed lymphoedematous swelling of the right ankle which has gradually spread up the leg the groin. Four months ago he noted enlargement of the inguinal glands on the that side. On examination the right leg

circumference at 10cm intervals from the lateral malleolus was greater than left by following sequential values 5, 6, 10, 7, 11, 8 centimetres. The right inguinal lymph were distinctly large than the left in both the vertical and horizontal chains. There were no other abnormal physical signs.

The reason we report this non filarial elephantiasis as a probable case of podoconiosis is that inguinal gland removal to prove the diagnosis was felt not to be in the patients best interests in view of the prejudiced lymphatic drainage from his lower limb.

REFERENCES

1. Marsden PD. Obstructive lymphatic filariasis. *British Medical Journal* 306:136, 1993.
2. Price EW. Podoconiosis. Non filarial elephantiasis. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990.

We are,

M.S. Tada and P.D. Marsden
Núcleo de Medicina Tropical e Nutrição,
Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, DF.