Livedo Racemosa Associated with Autoimmune Disease and Neuropathic Symptoms: Management with Lumbar Sympathetic Block

Aaron Burshtein, MD, Jung H Kim, MD
NYP Hospital/Columbia University Irving Medical Center
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

INTRODUCTION

- Livedo racemosa is a persistent, irregular violaceous vascular pattern associated with systemic disease, particularly antiphospholipid syndrome (APS) and systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).
- Symptoms include neuropathy, dysesthesia, vasomotor instability, and autonomic dysfunction

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- We present a single-patient case report of lumbar sympathetic block for livedo racemosa. Informed consent was obtained from the patient.

CASE REPORT

- 41-year-old man with SLE and antiphospholipid syndrome presented with progressive bilateral lower-extremity numbness, paresthesias, and persistent livedo racemosa.
- Symptoms were worsened by cold exposure and prolonged standing/sitting and were associated with vasomotor instability, impaired ambulation during flares, and reduced quality of life.
- Examination showed irregular violaceous reticular discoloration of both lower extremities, cold distal extremities, edema, hyperesthesia, and decreased ankle range of motion.

Lumbar sympathetic block produces **~70% improvement** in neuropathic symptoms for **Livedo Racemosa**



Figure 1. Bilateral lower extremities demonstrating Livedo Racemosa dated May 2024



CASE REPORT

- Symptoms persisted despite extensive medical therapy, including hydroxychloroquine, aspirin, rituximab, belimumab, pentoxifylline, corticosteroids, and prior methotrexate.
- He was referred to interventional pain management and diagnosed with bilateral lower-extremity CRPS type I with suspected autonomic dysfunction.
- Serial lumbar sympathetic blocks were performed, beginning unilaterally and progressing to bilateral L3 blocks, with approximately 70% improvement in numbness and paresthesias.
- Repeat bilateral blocks for subsequent flares produced reproducible symptomatic improvement, with improved function and quality of life.
- Cutaneous livedo racemosa persisted, but no procedural complications were observed.

DISCUSSION

- Case highlights the overlap between dermatologic vascular disease and neurologic dysfunction in livedo racemosa.
- The observed response to LSB suggests a role for sympathetic overactivity and microvascular dysregulation in symptom pathogenesis.
- Sympathetic blockade may improve perfusion and modulate neuropathic signaling, offering a potential adjunctive therapy in refractory cases.

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