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INTRODUCTION

- Lipedema is a chronic, painful adipose tissue disorder characterized by symmetric limb involvement, tenderness, and resistance to diuretic therapy^{1,2}
- Distal involvement of the hands and feet is uncommon in early disease but may develop in advanced stages due to secondary lymphatic dysfunction, resulting in lipo-lymphedema²
- Recognition of this progression is clinically challenging, particularly when coexisting conditions confound diagnosis
- We present a case highlighting diagnostic reasoning and management considerations in chronic distal extremity pain and swelling

MATERIALS & METHODS

- Patient informed consent obtained
- The case is exempt from IRB review per institutional policy due to absence of identifiable patient information

CASE REPORT/ RESULTS

A 44-year-old woman with medical history of chronic migraines and allergies presented with >3 years of symmetric hand and foot pain and swelling.

- Describes symptoms as aching, pressure-like, hypersensitive
- Limiting daily activities
- Diuretic-resistant
- Normal laboratory evaluation

Imaging:

MRI shows cervical degenerative disc disease, mild cervical stenosis, and lumbar degenerative changes

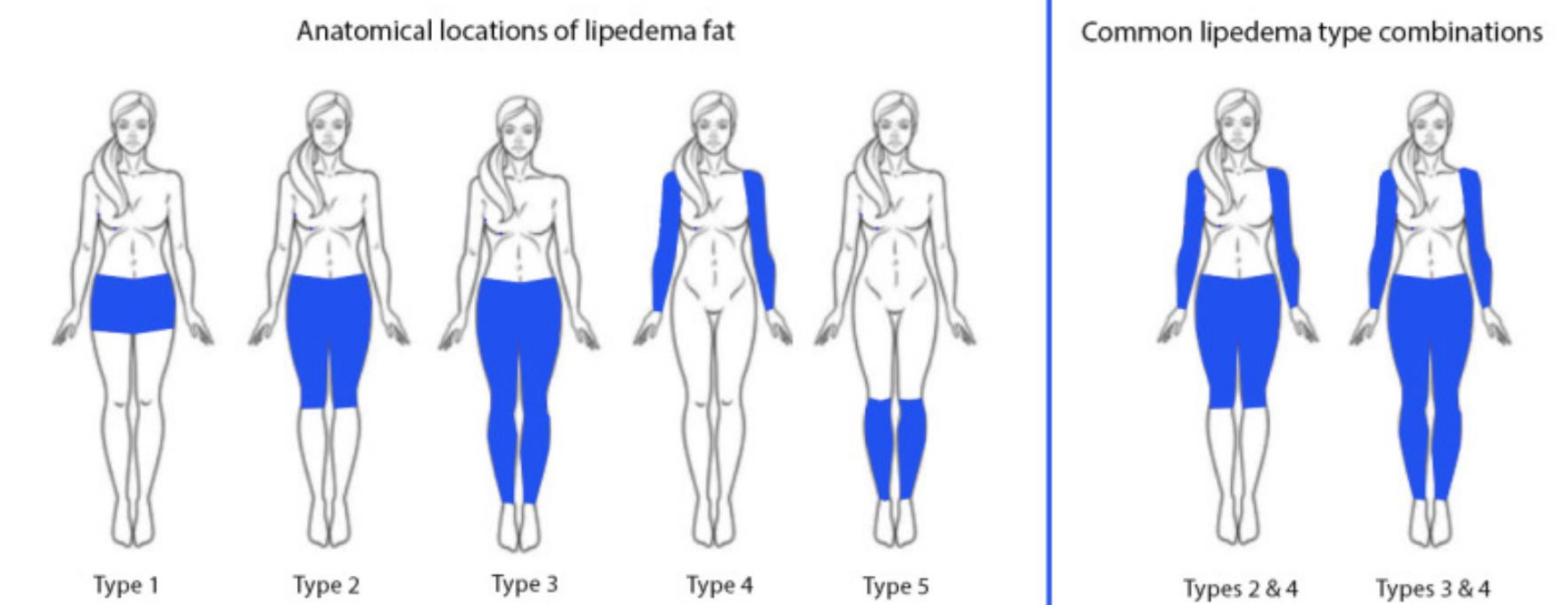
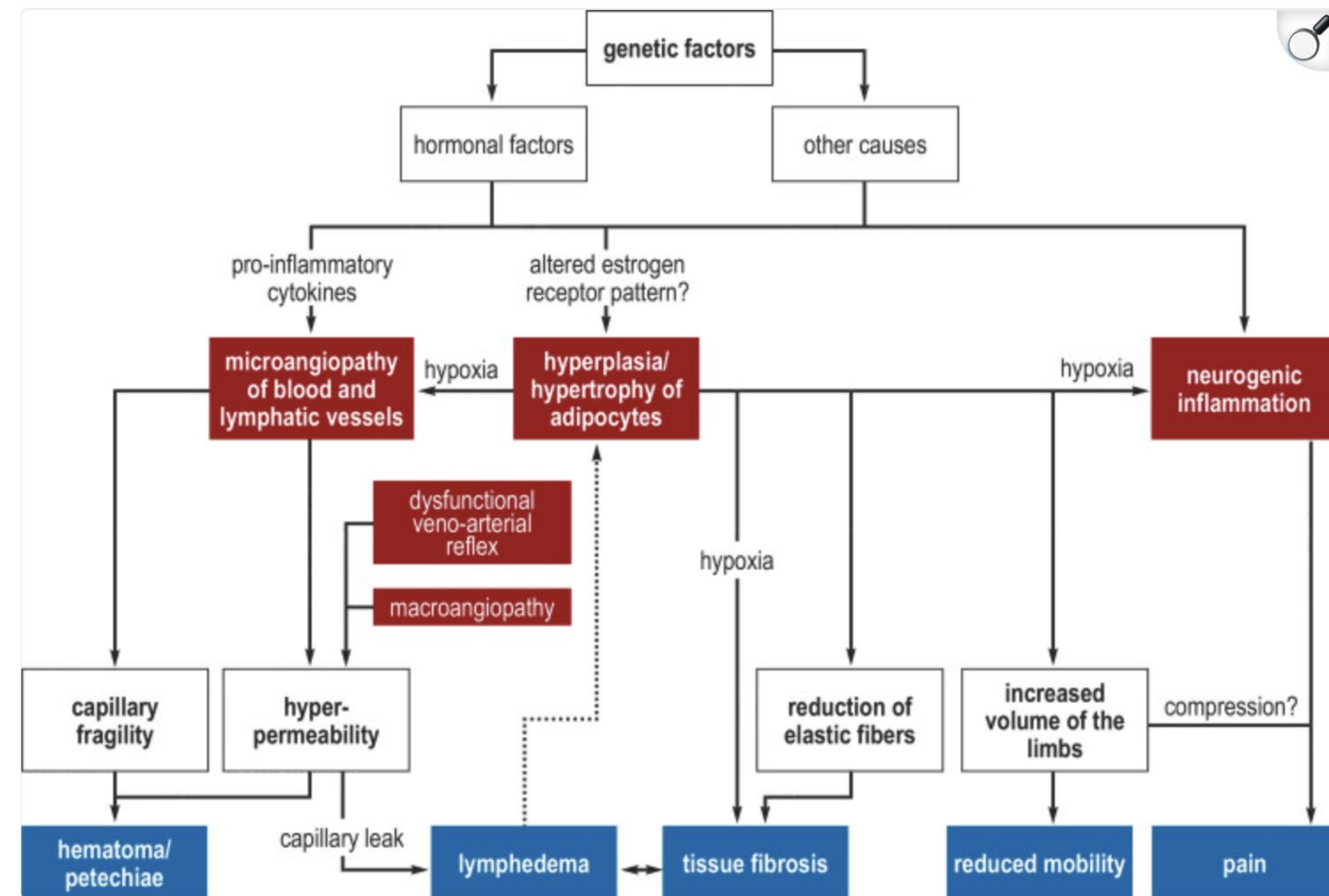
- These changes do not explain persistent, symmetric dependent edema

Diagnosis:

Advanced Lipedema with Secondary Lipo-Lymphedema

Management:

- Compression therapy
- Manual lymphatic drainage
- Exercise
- Skin care
- Physical therapy



Figure

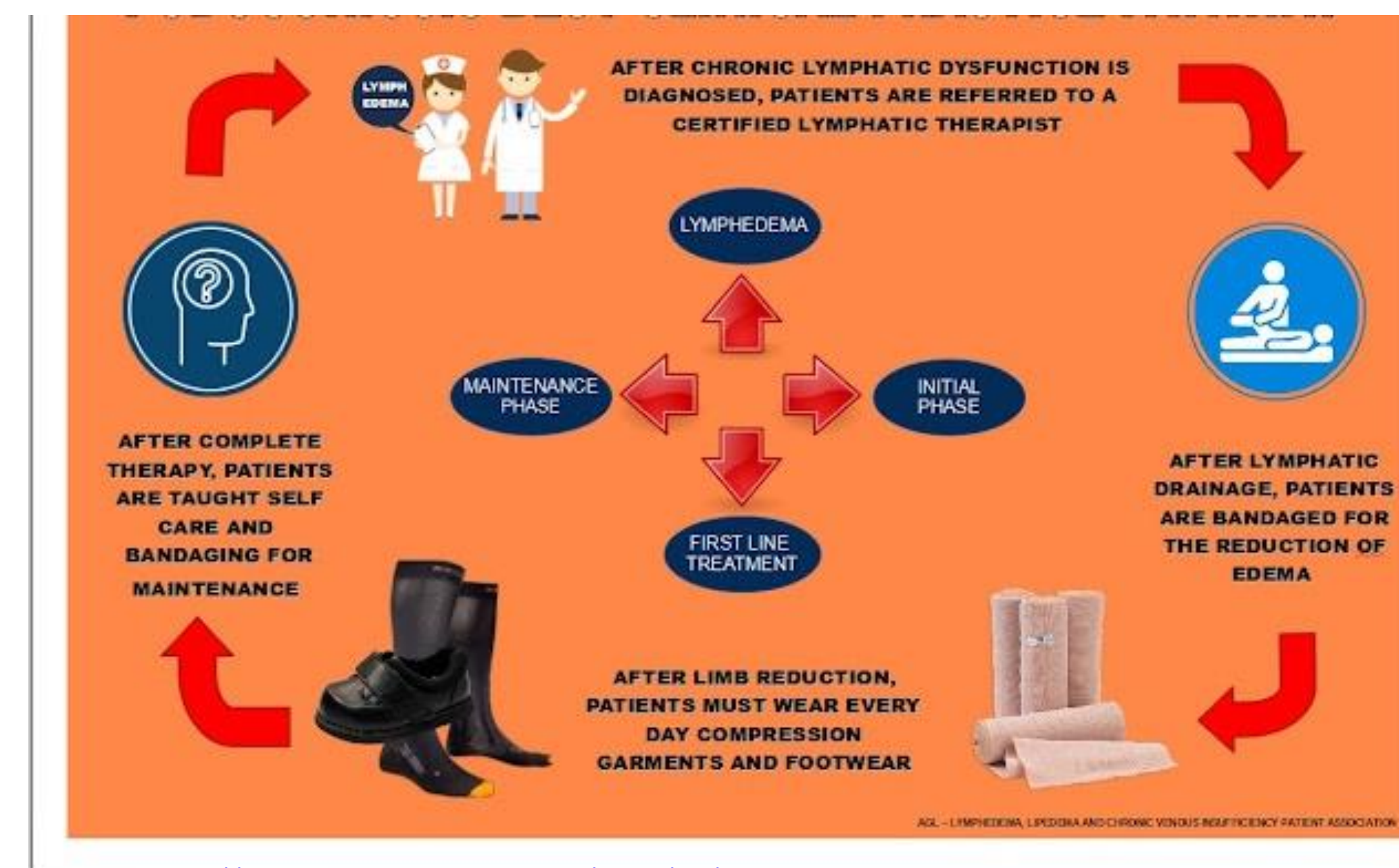
Vyas, A., & Adnan, G. (2022). Lipedema. PubMed; StatPearls Publishing.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK573066/>

DISCUSSION

- This case highlights the diagnostic challenge of chronic distal extremity pain and swelling with coexisting spinal pathology
- Degenerative spine disease may cause neuropathic symptoms but does not explain symmetric dependent edema of the hands and feet. A prolonged course, symmetric findings, normal laboratories, and diuretic resistance supported advanced lipedema with secondary lymphatic dysfunction
- Early recognition matters, as management relies on conservative, multidisciplinary strategies focused on symptom control and functional preservation, underscoring diagnostic breadth in practice

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