A New Form of Arthritis Mutilans Related to Successful Gout Treatment

Kristín Sigurjónsdóttir and Helgi Jonsson

Department of Rheumatology, Landspitalinn University Hospital, University of Iceland, Iceland

Corresponding author: Helgi Jonsson, Department of Rheumatology, Landspitalinn University Hospital, University of Iceland, 101, Iceland, Tel: +354 525 4000; E-mail: helgijon@landspitali.is

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Clinical Image

82 years old woman with a history of severe nodal hand osteoarthritis affecting both fingers and thumb base. She also had hypertension and chronic renal failure and in 1992 she started getting attacks of gout. Attempts to treat her with allopurinol had to be stopped due to side effects. Her hands became progressively affected by tophaceous gout with chronic pain particularly in the DIP joints. In 2012 she started febuxostat 80mg daily. Her symptoms improved within weeks and serum uric acid levels changed from 712 µmol/l in 2012 to 89 µmol/l in 2014. Tophy at other sites, including a large olecranon tophus regressed and have now disappeared (Figure 1).

Looking at her hands today it is surprising that she is quite satisfied with her treatment. Despite the deformities, the hands are now totally painless. Apparently, her DIP joints and phalanges were so saturated with uric acid deposition that when the trophy resorbed the bones collapsed.

Figure 1: Hand osteoarthritis.