

# Chapter 42

## Bleeding Scalp Ulcer in a Patient with Multiple Neoplasias



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A 90-year-old male patient was referred to the Emergency Unit because of a malodorous, bleeding scalp ulcer. His medical history was positive for colon carcinoma, B-cell chronic lymphocytic leukemia treated with bendamustin, field cancerization on the head, tumor-associated anemia, thrombopenia, gluteal pressure sores grade III and acute urinary tract infection.

On physical examination we observed a large scalp ulcer with living organisms (Fig. 42.1). After mechanical removal of the maggots a clean ulcerated tumor was presented (Fig. 42.2).

Based on the case description and the photographs, what is your diagnosis?

### Differential Diagnoses

1. Myiasis.
2. Neuropathic ulcer.
3. Leishmaniasis.
4. Ulcerated squamous cell carcinoma.
5. Secondary cutaneous B-cell chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

### Diagnosis

Myiasis on squamous cell carcinoma.

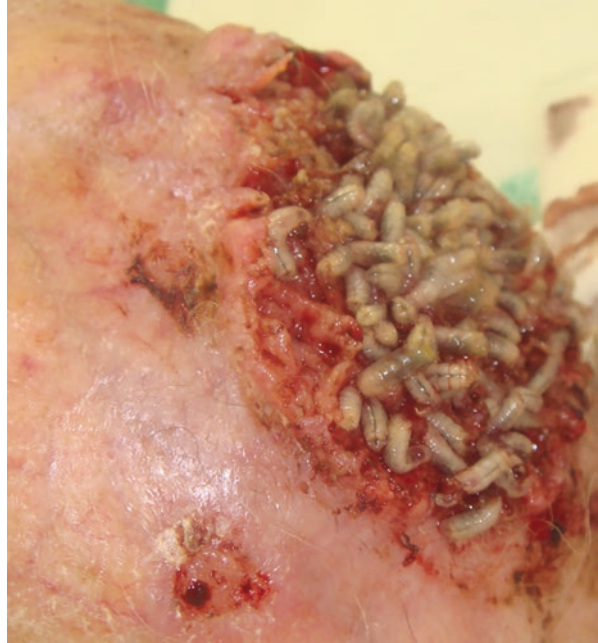
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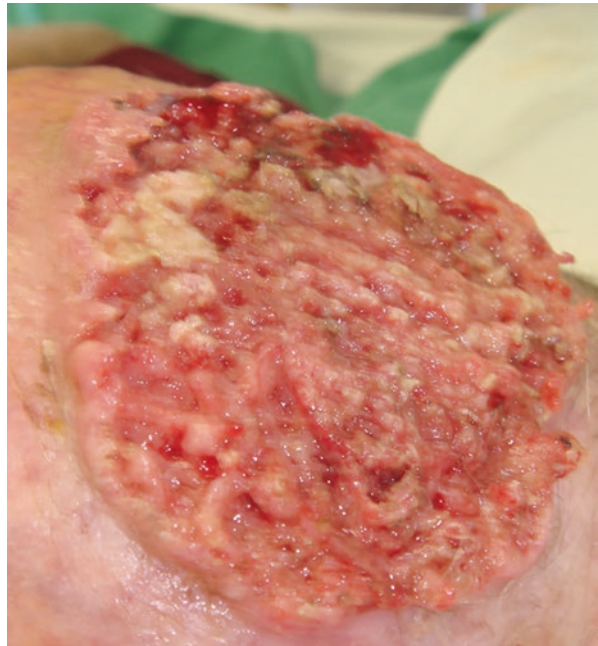
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**Fig. 42.1** A scalp ulceration with living animals



**Fig. 42.2** A clean wound after maggots' removal



## Discussion

Maggot therapy or biosurgery has become a regular medical treatment at the beginning of the last century but was forgotten after invention of antibiotics. The treatment has gained a renaissance around the turn of the last century to clean necrotic wounds with biofilms, such as diabetic foot ulcers or pressure sores [1].

In the present patient, infestation with maggot was accidental. This is called myiasis. Myiasis with maggots bears a risk of secondary bacterial infections including sepsis and bleeding. Maggots that feed from vital tissue can cause significant tissue damage, inflammation and pain [2]. Myiasis of skin cancer has rarely been reported [3]. The maggots should be removed mechanically to avoid further bleeding and infection [4, 5].

Due to the bad general condition of the presented patient, no treatment for squamous cell carcinoma was introduced and the further treatment was palliative only.

### Key Points

- Myiasis is an infestation with maggots.
- Maggots may cause bleeding, inflammation and secondary bacterial infections. Therefore, they should be mechanically removed.

## References

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