Oh MYositis
Ellen Clark, MSIII & Aaron Wolfe, DO, FACEP
University of Colorado School of Medicine

Chief Complaint
Left thigh pain

History of Present Illness
48-year-old obese female with past medical history of poorly controlled diabetes who presents with a 4-day history of constant and acute worsening left upper thigh pain. Patient went to PCP earlier today and had bloodwork and ultrasound of leg which was negative for DVT.

- Pain described as sharp and throbbing localized to left medial thigh
- Acutely worsened over past 2 hours
- No recent trauma. No relieving factors, exacerbated with movement and touch.
- No associated fever, cough, rash or SOB
- No history of smoking or drinking.

Pertinent Labs & Imaging
- **CBC**: WBCs **15.9** (82.8% neutrophils), otherwise WNL
- **CMP**: Glucose **361**, otherwise WNL
- **CK**: 100
- **Lactic acid**: **3.4**
- **ESR**: **25**
- **CRP**: **2.1**

Pertinent Exam Findings
- **Vitals**: T **98.4** HR 89 BP 142/91 RR 22 SpO2 93% (RA)
- **General**: Unable to ambulate secondary to pain, brought back in a wheelchair. Significant distress secondary to leg pain. Obese.
- **Cardiovascular**: Regular rate and rhythm. BLS well perfused with palpable dorsalis pedis pulses.
- **Musculoskeletal**:
  - **LLE**: Approximate 6 cm x 6 cm exquisitely tender area on left medial thigh with overlying edema, erythema and fluctuance; no cyanosis, streaking, no lesions, no peripheral edema and no calf tenderness
  - **RLE**: No tenderness, no rashes, no lesions, no peripheral edema, and no calf tenderness

CT (with contrast) and MRI (with and without contrast) of LLE:
- Extensive subcutaneous edema over anterior and medial aspect of distal left thigh (yellow arrows)
- Subjacent extensive hypodensity (CT)/high signal (MRI) throughout vastus medialis muscle (blue arrows)
- No soft tissue air

Clinical Course
- Immediate surgery consult, CT scan and IV antibiotics
- Case discussed with general surgery and radiologist. Concluded: high suspicion for diabetic myonecrosis and low suspicion for necrotizing fasciitis (based on exam and duration of symptoms and imaging).
- Patient was admitted as necrotizing fasciitis remained on differential
- MRI confirmed diagnosis of diabetic myositis with myonecrosis

Discussion
- Diabetic muscle infarction (DMI) is the term used for spontaneous ischemic necrosis of skeletal muscle – a rare complication of long-standing and poorly controlled DM
- Exact pathophysiology is unknown, although the source of skeletal muscle injury is thought to be secondary to hypoxia-reperfusion injury, atherosclerotic occlusion or vasculitis with thrombosis
- Average age of presentation is 40, more common in women and type 1 diabetics presenting with atraumatic extremity pain without systemic signs
- DMI most commonly affects a single lower limb and most commonly is the quadriceps about 60% of the time
- Bloodwork tends to be unremarkable. MRI is considered the diagnostic imaging tool of choice but CT scan can be used
- No definitive standard of care for managing patients with DMI, however, studies have shown that it responds well to conservative treatment with NSAIDS and is self-limiting

Clinical Pearls
- Diabetic myositis and myonecrosis should be considered in the differential diagnosis for diabetic patients presenting with extremity pain and swelling but is a diagnosis after excluding necrotizing fasciitis
- MRI serves as the best tool for diagnosis
- Treatment involves supportive care, glycemic control, and NSAIDs or antiplatelet therapy