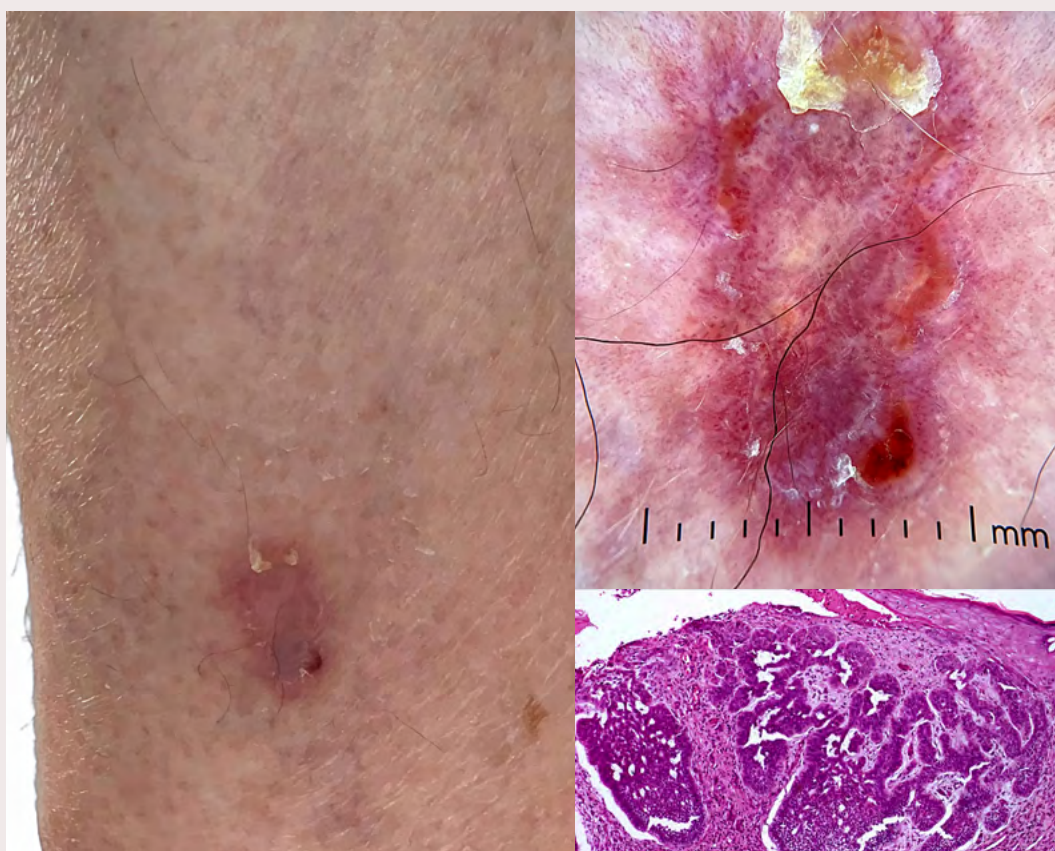


IMAGES IN DERMATOLOGY

The Chameleon Carcinoma: When a Basal Cell Carcinoma Disguises Itself as Bowen's Disease

José Plata,^{*} Javier Rosero,^{*} Santiago Palacios,^{**} Gabriela Zumárraga,^{***}
Johanna Brito,^{****} Doménica Lara^{*****}



A 74-year-old female patient presented to the Dermatology Service with a one-year-old lesion that had progressively increased in size and showed occasional bleeding. On physical examination, an erythematous and keratotic plaque approximately 1 cm x 1.5 cm in

diameter was found on the outer aspect of the left leg (Figure 1). Dermoscopy revealed a non-melanocytic lesion with radial dotted vessels, a yellowish crust on one end, and whitish structureless areas (Figure 2).

^{*} Dermatology Service, Universidad Tecnológica Equinoccial (UTE), Quito, Ecuador
^{**} Dermatology Service, Centro de la Piel (CEPI), Quito, Ecuador
^{***} Private Occupational Health Practice, Quito, Ecuador
^{****} Dermatopathology Service, Centro de la Piel (CEPI), Quito, Ecuador
^{*****} Medical Student, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (PUCE), Quito, Ecuador

Autor de correspondencia
Dr. José Alfredo Plata López
Quito, Ecuador.
japl1994@hotmail.com
Teléfono: 0999709118

An incisional biopsy of the lesion was performed, and the pathology report showed: skin covered by a sero-hematic crust with clusters of polymorphonuclear cells and cellular debris. A malignant neoplasm of epithelial origin was present, composed of atypical basaloid cells with a cribriform growth pattern, peripheral palisading, peritumoral retraction, and myxoid stromal change (Figure 3).

Basal cell carcinoma (BCC) is the most common type of skin cancer, known for its slow growth and low metastatic potential. It develops from the basal cells of the epidermis and may appear in different forms such as nodular, superficial, pigmented, and morpheaform. Although usually indolent, it can be locally invasive and cause damage if not treated properly.¹

Superficial BCC can resemble Bowen's disease (squamous cell carcinoma in situ),² complicating the diagnosis due to clinical similarities. Tools such as dermoscopy and reflectance confocal microscopy are useful in distinguishing between both conditions.³ Dermoscopy of superficial BCC typically shows a yellow-red background with blue-gray dots and dendritic vessels, while Bowen's disease presents keratinocytic atypia,⁴ a disorganized brown color pattern, and visible blood vessels.⁵

INFORMED CONSENT

The patient included in this study signed informed consent, approving the use of their images and clinical

data exclusively for research and scientific publication purposes. No personal data were disclosed, nor were any identifying photographs used.

REFERENCES

1. Monteagudo Alvarez J, et al. Este Artículo Está Bajo Licencia de Creative Commons. vol. 25 (2021). Disponible en: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0751.981X>.
2. Hasbún Acuña P, Cullen Aravena R, Maturana Doñaire C, Ares Mora R, Porras Kusmanic N. Pigmented basal cell carcinoma mimicking a superficial spreading melanoma. *Medwave*. 2016;16:e6805.
3. Chen KJ, Wang ZY, Han Y, Cui Y. Superficial basal cell carcinoma mimicking Bowen's disease: Diagnosis with noninvasive imaging. *Skin Res Technol*. 2023;29. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1111/srt.13316>.
4. Scalvenzi M, Villani A, Mazzella C, Fabbrocini G, Costa C. Cutaneous Bowen's disease: An analysis of 182 cases according to age, sex, and anatomical site from an Italian center. *Open Access Maced J Med Sci*. 2019;7:696-697. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.3889/oamjms.2019.123>.
5. Cox NH, Eedy DJ, Morton CA. Guidelines for Management of Bowen's Disease. *Indian J Dermatol Venereol Leprol*. 2021.

ORCID

José Plata  <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-5971-4886>

How to cite this article: Plata J., Rosero J., Palacios S., Zumárraga G., Brito Luna J., Lara D. "El carcinoma camaleón: Cuando un carcinoma basocelular se disfraza de enfermedad de Bowen - Dermatología en Imágenes. *Rev Dermatol Cent Úraga*. 2025;7(2).

Date of receipt: 10/02/2025

Date of acceptance: 18/02/2025