

Clinical Image

Title: Beau Lines: Tell-Tale Signs of Stress or Illness

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A 58-year-old female who was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma received five cycles of the EPOCH (etoposide, doxorubicin, vincristine, prednisone, and cyclophosphamide) chemotherapy regimen with good response. She was seen again two months following her last cycle of chemotherapy, at which point her nails showed a succession of classic Beau lines coincident with each cycle of chemotherapy. Beau lines are horizontal ridges that occur when there is temporary cessation of nail growth in times of stress such as illness, trauma, surgery or chemotherapy. The time of the insult leading to Beau line formation can be determined by measuring its distance from the proximal nail fold as nails grow at an average rate of one millimetre per month.