Tumour regression (intermediate and late)

A host immunologic response may be directed against melanoma and may result in elimination of part or all of the melanoma; this is termed regression. This phenomenon may be categorized into three temporal stages: early, intermediate and late. Early regression is signified by the presence of tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes (TILs). Intermediate and late regression result in partial or complete loss of melanoma and are characterized by immature (intermediate) and mature (late) dermal fibrosis, often accompanied by the presence of melanophages and effacement of the rete architecture. Most reports assessing the prognostic significance of regression have not differentially analysed intermediate and late regression.

Reason/Evidentiary Support:

The prognostic significance of (intermediate and late) regression is controversial.\(^1\) Some studies report that it portends a worse prognosis (particularly in thin melanomas),\(^2\) whereas others report that it is associated with a more favourable outcome.\(^1\) Difficulties in interpreting such studies include lack of a standardised definition or criteria for its diagnosis, selection bias, and poor interobserver reproducibility.

References:
