A 42-year-old man was admitted to our hospital to receive his seventh round of monotherapy with docetaxel for lung cancer. Docetaxel was started 6 months previously as the third regimen of chemotherapy and repeated at 4-week intervals. The patient noticed that white lines and depressions had appeared on his nail plates following the initiation of docetaxel therapy. Multiple transverse white bands were observed on both fingernails and toenails, accompanied by depressions in the latter, at regular intervals (Picture 1, 2).

The administration of cytotoxic chemotherapeutic drugs may temporarily damage the nail matrix and affect the proliferative process. Transient arrest of nail production causes transverse depressions on the nail plates, also referred to as Beau’s lines. Mees’ lines are transverse striate leukonychia (white lines) induced by temporary disorganized keratinization with chemotherapeutic agents (1, 2). The observation of nail plates is important in the physical examination and the appearance often reflects the patient’s history of treatment as well as the physical condition.

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References