Dirt-like lesions

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CASE REPORT

A 11-year-old female child diagnosed with hyperinsulinism during neonatal period and treated with recombinant growth hormone and prednisone until she was seven years old. Since then, the child has not been on any medication and has not had hypoglycemia episodes. Three months ago, the patient noticed asymptomatic brownish lesions on ankles and dorsum of the foot. She has adequate hygiene habits and reports many removal attempts, scrubbing the area with sponge, soap and water, without success. Upon examination, patient presented hyperchromic light brown stains interspersed with normal color skin area on dorsum of her feet and on the internal retro-malleolar region (Figures 1A and 1B). After suspected diagnosis, the removal was performed with isopropanol and the lesions disappeared (Figure 1C).

TERRA FIRMA-FORME

Terra firma-forme is a dermatosis that causes skin color alterations very similar to dirt stains in patients with proper hygiene habits. Its unaesthetic aspects can lead to cosmetic problems, including Bulling¹.

Cleaning with soap and water can remove dirt, but does not remove Terra firma-forme lesions. Cleaning performed with steady pressure of gauze soaked in isopropanol removes this lesion. This procedure may be repeated if lesions reappear. In cases of frequent recurrence, cleaning with alcohol can be maintained once a week for a few months.

Faced with this diagnostic suspicion, isopropanol removal may be attempted in the medical practice. Terra firme-forme is a discoloration determined by localized hyperkeratosis due to unknown causes² and results from keratinocytes delayed maturation, which retains melanin and accumulates sebum, sweat and microorganisms.

Histological evaluation is unnecessary but, if performed, acanthosis, papillomatosis and lamellar hyperkeratosis are the expected findings³. It is more frequent in children and adolescents and affects the neck, ankles and facial regions⁴. When lesions are located in the neck, the disease can be misdiagnosed as acanthosis nigricans, with the possibility of unnecessary investigations⁵. It is important to correctly identify this dermatosis in order to avoid

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Figure 1. Hyperchromic light brown stains (A and B); regression of the lesions (C).
unnecessary diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, and reassure adolescents and their families.

REFERENCES


