

Terra Firma-Forme Dermatitis

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A 14-year-old female, with a history of obesity (body mass index of 33 kg/m²), poor school performance, depression, bullying, and suicide attempt, presented in the dermatology appointment with brown lesions in the armpits and neck, with five years of evolution. She reported adequate hygiene habits, including attempts to remove the lesions with exfoliation and treatment with sunscreen and topical steroids of high potency (clobetasol) without improvement. On physical examination, she had a poorly defined, velvety surface, hyperpigmented plaque on her neck (Fig. 1) and armpits. Blood tests did not present evidence of hyperinsulinism, altered thyroid function, or dyslipidemia. Abdominal and pelvic ultrasounds were normal. Due to the presentation, the diagnosis of *terra firma-forme* dermatosis was considered. A therapeutic test was performed by rubbing a compress with isopropyl alcohol and the lesions disappeared (Fig. 2). Therefore, the diagnosis of *terra firma-forme* dermatosis was made.

This dermatosis is characterized by the presence of brown-gray, velvety pigmented plaques with a dirt-like appearance.^{1,2} It is a benign, acquired, and idiopathic dermatosis, with an important aesthetic impact.^{2,3} The differential diagnosis includes acanthosis nigricans and other dermatosis that occur with hyperpigmentation.¹ The definitive diagnosis is made by biopsy, but it is rarely necessary.^{2,3}

Terra firma-forme dermatosis is probably underdiagnosed in the pediatric population.^{3,4} The lesions affect individuals with adequate hygiene habits and cannot be removed with cleansing with soap and water.^{3,5} The application of 70% isopropyl alcohol is both diagnostic and therapeutic for this disorder.² Its early recognition leads to avoiding unnecessary clinical investigation, enabling treatment, and improving the self-esteem of the child/adolescent.

Keywords: 2-Propanol/therapeutic use; Adolescent; Hyperpigmentation/diagnosis; Hyperpigmentation/drug therapy; Skin Diseases/diagnosis; Skin diseases/drug therapy



Figure 1. The initial appearance of brown plaques on the neck.



Figure 2. Resolution of the lesions after rubbing with isopropyl alcohol.

WHAT THIS REPORT ADDS

- *Terra firma-forme* dermatosis is a benign and idiopathic dermatosis, probably underdiagnosed in children.
- This dermatosis has an important aesthetic impact and occurs in patients with adequate hygiene habits.
- The application of isopropyl alcohol is an easy diagnostic and therapeutic test that avoid unnecessary clinical investigation.

Conflicts of Interest

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Consent for publication

Consent for publication was obtained.

Confidentiality of data

The authors declare that they have followed the protocols of their work centre on the publication of patient data.

Awards and presentations

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