

Innovations

Innovative use of steel kitchen spatula for mid-back pruritus

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PROBLEM

Notalgia paresthetica (NP) causes intractable pruritus on the normal-looking skin of the mid back (T2–T6), which is exceedingly unpleasant. NP is caused by the impingement of cutaneous nerves. Stroking the back with a physical object can provide relief. In general, it is done with companions or by rubbing the back against the wall, a projecting pillar's corner, or a wooden door frame. This is especially difficult at night when you are single, as it affects your sleep. Trying to scratch it with your own hands on a regular basis is difficult, and it can result in tennis elbow and frictional dermatosis. Some devices resemble human fingers, with well-spaced fingers that need more effort to rub certain itchy areas.

SOLUTION

For relief from the itchy back, we used a stainless steel kitchen spatula. The spatula is 2.5 inches in diameter and has a 12-inch handle, making it appropriate for scratching the skin on all areas of the back. The distal half of a spatula is manually bent 45–60° to form a curved spatula-like available device [Figure 1a and b]. This spatula helps you to rub the unreachable area of your back easily and quickly without causing any major skin injury. The itch in NP is intermittent rather than continuous, and topical medicines are ineffective. For this NP with mild to moderate irritation, rubbing the location gently with a kitchen spatula may be a useful solution. If the

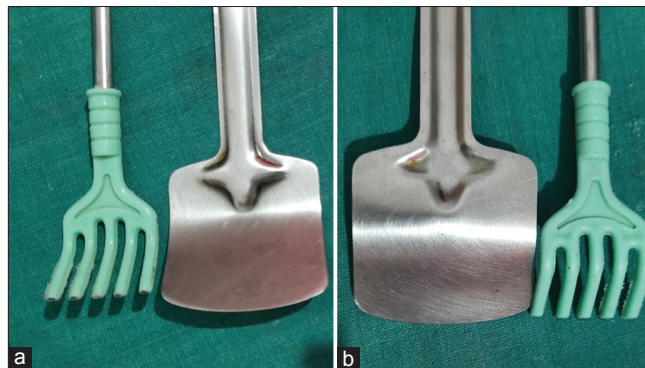


Figure 1: (a and b) The kitchen spatula is modified to make back scratcher.

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pruritus is severe and persistent, gabapentin can be used to prevent subsequent frictional dermatoses such as frictional amyloidosis and lichen simplex chronicus on the back. An ice pack may also be useful in this situation. Thus, this spatula's even border provides quick relief from pruritus with fewer strokes compared to finger or brush like pointed devices. The stroke of the blunt device is less forceful ($\text{Pressure} = \text{Force} / \text{Area}$) and less damaging to the skin. A large spoon can be used instead of the spatula for this reason.

Ethical approval

The Institutional Review Board approval is not required.

Declaration of patient consent

Patient's consent was not required as there are no patients in this study.

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Nil.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

Use of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technology for manuscript preparation

The authors confirm that there was no use of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technology for assisting in the writing or editing of the manuscript and no images were manipulated using AI.

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