

Images/Instrument in Dermatology/Dermatosurgery

Mottled rash on the dorsal feet of an adolescent girl

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An 18-year-old girl from a semi-urban area sought remote consultation through teledermatology for a “winter season” rash on her feet. On examination, distinct mottled hyperpigmentation in a reticulate, mesh-like pattern on the dorsal aspect of both feet, with the left side showing more prominence, was observed [Figures 1 and 2]. Further, probing revealed that she had been spending prolonged hours studying next to a heater with the bare left foot positioned directly next to the appliance. A diagnosis of “Erythema ab igne” was established, and she was counseled to avoid the proximity of the bare area to the heat source.

Erythema ab igne or “toasted skin syndrome” results from repeated and prolonged exposure to low levels of infrared radiation, such as from a heating appliance, insufficient to cause a burn. This exposure causes degeneration of elastic fibers and basal cells leading to the release of melanin and dark lacy discoloration.^[1] The rash initially manifests as transient, mottled erythema and progresses to fixed, reticulate hyperpigmentation.^[2] The condition, less common in youth, may be misdiagnosed as livedo reticularis leading to unnecessary immunological investigations, but may be distinguished by its pigmentary rather than telangiectatic changes.^[1]



Figure 1: Mottled, reticulate hyperpigmentation on dorsum of left foot; (placed directly next to heat source).

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Figure 2: Similar, faint rash on dorsal aspect of right foot; (placed relatively further from heat source).

Ethical approval

The Institutional Review Board approval is not required.

Declaration of patient consent

The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent.

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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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