

EPIDEMIOLOGY

SEVERE TOXIC SKIN REACTION DUE TO A MARINE ENVENOMATION

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Background: Cnidarians are species of aquatic animals. Despite most being harmless, some species may cause local and even systemic reactions. We report an impressive case of a marine envenomation.

Observation: A 14-year-old child presented with painful erythematous lesions of sudden onset while swimming at the sea a day before. These lesions were associated with tingling and burns without systemic symptoms. On examination, he had linear well-defined edematous, erythematous, scarring and swollen lesions with a necrotic base of the left cheek and the left forehead associated with an important edema of the upper and lower eyelid causing a palpebral occlusion. Ophthalmological examination was normal. Hemodynamic, neurological and respiratory features were normal. Biological investigations were correct. Anamnestic and clinical findings were suggestive of a cnidarian envenomation. A short-term systemic corticosteroid therapy with systemic antibiotic therapy and local treatment lead to almost completely eyelid edema regression after four days and improvement of skin lesions.

Key message: Cnidarian envenomation may cause different clinical presentations ranging from simple skin manifestations to severe general signs with hemodynamic, respiratory or neurological failure. Clinical features can rarely be sufficient to identify the culprit organism. Antihistamines or corticosteroids may be prescribed. In our case, systemic antibiotic therapy was necessary to treat cutaneous bacterial infection. Our case illustrates a severe toxic skin reaction due to a marine envenomation with an impressive eyelid edema. Thus, in the case of any skin manifestation of sudden onset after a swim at sea, it is necessary to evoke a marine envenomation, even if the patient does not remember having seen the organism, in order to benefit from appropriate treatment.





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