



INFLAMMATORY SKIN DISEASES (OTHER THAN ATOPIC DERMATITIS & PSORIASIS)

ERYTHEMA AB IGNE FROM HEATING PAD USE: A REPORT OF THREE CLINICAL CASES AND A DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS

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BACKGROUND: Chronic exposure to heat and infrared radiation may result in reticulated erythematous and hyperpigmented skin lesions known as erythema ab igne. This benign condition is asymptomatic and usually resolves with the cessation of heat exposure. However, it's morphology and distribution can appear similar to other reticulated erythematous disorders.

OBSERVATION: We present three cases of erythema ab igne from chronic heating pad use over a duration of six months to three years for pain alleviation. The lesions were asymptomatic in all three patients and were incidental skin findings. The patients used heating pad for several hours consecutively and denied any associated burning or discomfort. Physical examination revealed reticulated, ill-defined, reddish-brown patches on their back and/or abdomen. Other conditions with a similar reticulated appearance as erythema ab igne were considered in the differential diagnosis which include livedo reticularis, livedo racemosa, cutis marmorata, and cutis marmorata telangiectatica congenita. The patients were informed of the benign nature of this condition and that cessation of heating pad use would likely result in the resolution of their lesions.

KEY MESSAGE: When evaluating a patient with reticulated hyperpigmented erythema, the diagnosis of erythema ab igne should be considered if there is a history of chronic heat exposure with a corresponding distribution.

Additionally, knowledge of similarly appearing cutaneous diseases is important for determining whether the underlying cause of a patient's erythematous hyperpigmented lesions is benign, or a more worrisome entity that would require further work up.

