



PIGMENTATION

## FRICTIONAL FACIAL MELANOSIS – DEFINING A NEW ENTITY

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**Introduction:** Dermatologists come across a huge number of patients with complaints of characteristic hyperpigmentation over the forehead, temple area and cheeks. These changes are often diagnosed as facial acanthosis, macular amyloidosis or photodermatitis. Epidemiological patterns, dermoscopic features & histopathological changes in these patients were studied.

**Materials & Methods:** 60 patients with diffuse hyperpigmentation, typically over the bony prominences of the face, were selected. All the patients were asked to demonstrate methods they used to clean their face. Skin biopsy samples from hyperpigmented areas were examined. Dermoscopic photographs were also recorded for histopathological – dermoscopic correlation..

**Results:** All the patients in the study exhibited a habit of forceful rubbing of the hyperpigmented areas with their handkerchiefs, hands or sleeves of the shirt. Characteristic dermoscopic findings were noted and evaluated. Histopathological findings included a) irregular acanthosis of epidermis with antler like projection of the rete ridges(90%), melanin incontinence(60%), hypermelanosis of the basal layer(95%), a superficial papillary perivascular lymphohistiocytic infiltrate(70%) & vertical banding of the collagen fibres(35%) , which were suggestive of chronic frictional changes. These findings were consistent with findings of frictional loofah melanosis, which has been reported before from groups in middle eastern countries.

**Conclusions:** This study proposes a new etiology for the commonly found hyperpigmentation over the face in the Indian population. A literature search revealed no published reports in Pubmed indexed journals reporting this entity of hyperpigmentation over the face secondary to chronic forceful rubbing. Questioning of the patients revealed a belief that forceful rubbing will clean their face of dirt thoroughly, make them fairer and reduce the sweating. We present this study & define this entity, to create awareness about the same, which will help in better management of similar patients, and prevent misdiagnosis.

