



PSYCHODERMATOLOGY

## DERMATITIS ARTEFACTA IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE: A SPECTRUM OF DISEASE

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**Background:** Dermatitis Artefacta (DA) is a factitious skin disorder rarely reported in the paediatric population. We present a retrospective case note review of thirteen children with a diagnosis of DA that present with a spectrum of disease. A retrospective case note review was undertaken of children over a six-year period, from January 2012 to October 2018.

**Observation:** Twelve females and one male were identified. Average age 13.4y (range 11-15 years). The duration of illness ranged from one week to two years. Most skin lesions were located over accessible sites.

Three children presented with pink patches. A 14-year-old girl was referred from the Breast unit with tender pink discolouration of both breasts with no underlying infection. Another 14-year-old girl was referred with a one-week history of knee pain and demonstrated a linear erythematous patch on her thigh. The other was a 13-year-old girl who presented with a painful left first toe and a tender pink patch over this area. Two other children presented with well circumscribed "suction" petechiae around the perioral and chin area. Once organic disease was ruled out all children were diagnosed with DA. In all the above children, psycho-social stressors were identified and deconstructed using MDT Psychodermatology colleagues.

Another cohort of six children presented with linear tears and excoriations over various sites. This group had significant psychosocial co-morbidity. One child had been in care, two others were bullied at school. Another who had ADHD was a carer for her mother and was under CAMHS. The last two children revealed no clear precipitating factors elicited despite lengthy consultations.

**Key message:** Our current study indicates that there is little correlation between physical disease extent and psycho-social precipitants. Our study also indicates that children may not identify their disease as self-induced. Also, DA in children generally has a good prognosis.

