



TROPICAL DERMATOLOGY

## BURULI ULCER

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Background: Buruli ulcer is a necrotizing skin infection that results in extensive loss of substance and severe functional limitations. It is caused by the *Mycobacterium ulcerans* which produces a virulence factor known as mycolactone responsible for tissue ulceration. It is endemic in some regions of Africa and Asia, but is also found in Australia and Mexico. No vaccine is currently available.

From the clinical point of view, the presentation is heterogeneous as it may have edematous, nodular, plaque or ulcerative lesions. These clinical forms may progress differently so that a nodule can progress to a small ulcerative lesion or an edematous lesion may progress towards extensive ulceration. In the evolutionary determinism of the lesions an important factor is the presence of packs and the nutritional status of the patient. The therapy is based on the use of rifampicin and streptomycin.

However, the wide surgical removal of the lesion is always advisable, relying on the execution of flaps or grafts until amputation.

Observation: For some years the association "Doctors without holidays" has carried out voluntary work in the Camillian friars "La Croix" Hospital, in Zinviè in Benin, a region of the central Africa where the ulcer of Buruli is widespread. A center for Buruli ulcer therapy has been established there. In addition to the therapeutic aspects, the training of the health staff was very important.

Among expected difficulties, we have carried out a clinical and therapeutic observational study on the case studies we have received.

Key message: The authors report their experiences both from the didactic point of view and as an awareness raising project for this pathology, highlighting the importance of health cooperation with developing countries.

