

TROPICAL DERMATOLOGY

CUPPING AND COINING IN MIGRANT PEOPLE IN ITALY

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Introduction: Cupping and coining have been employed as a therapy by the ancient Greeks and Romans, and it is not unlikely that cupping and coining were in use even earlier in India and China. Nowadays they persist in societies which are still underdeveloped and even in underdeveloped pockets of the otherwise well-advanced nations of Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Australia. Cupping is a traditional medical practice, performed by placing on the skin heated cups of different materials containing reduced air pressure. The technique consists in a “skin traction” due to suction by heated air, which results in trauma of the outer blood vessels of the papillary derma, followed by local hyperemia. This is expected to promote and help healing in the area. Coining consists in vigorously rubbing a coin over the chest or back after applying hot oil or Tiger Balm, to the point of creating ecchymosis and linear petechiae.

Objective: we aimed to describe the case of Cupping and Coining observed in Immigrant people coming to Italy from Developing Countries

Material and Methods: we analyzed the cases of skin lesions due to Cupping and Coining in migrant patients attending to the San Gallicano Dermatological Institute in Rome between February 2015 to December 2017.

Results: we observed 159 patients (87 males and 72 females) coming from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Cambodia, with skin lesions due to the consequences of these practices. The cutaneous effects observed were local hyperaemia, erythema, oedema and ecchymosis.

Conclusions: the prevalence of alternative medicine, including cupping, in developed countries is greater than previously perceived. Immigrants bring sometimes cupping from their own countries to Italy. Thus, in our Institute it is frequent to observe in a high number of immigrants and refugees “lesions” which are a consequence of the practice of cupping.