DIRTY-WARTY TERRA FIRMA FORME DERMATOsis:
A CASE REPORT WITH ATYPICAL PRESENTATION

KEY WORDS:
Terra Firma
Forme Dermatosis

Introduction
Terra firma forme dermatosis represents a benign condition, characterized clinically by brown or black dirty looking patches or plaques. It has also been referred to as Duncan’s Dirty Dermatosis in honor of the physician who initially described this condition in Houston in 1987.[2] Herein, we report a case of Terra Firma Forme dermatosis with unusual presentation.

Case report
A 19-year-old-female presented with two months history of asymptomatic dirty looking elevated plaque and discoloration of surrounding skin over her chest. Patient was maintaining daily personal hygiene and lesion was not washable with soap and water. There was no relevant past medical illness.

On examination, Multiple dirty brown to grey colored papules varying in size, coalescing to form a discrete plaque and surrounding skin showing discoloration in the form of dirty grey brown deposition with bizarre shaped clear areas of skin.

During physical examination, cleansing with alcohol swab containing 70% isopropyl alcohol resulted in complete clearing off the lesion and confirmed the diagnosis of terra firma forme dermatosis.

Discussion
TFFD is an acquired, benign disorder of keratinization characterized by retention hyperkeratosis presenting as dirt like plaques, despite normal hygiene.[3] It derives its name from the Latin phrase terra-firma meaning dry land (dirt), thus implying dirt-like dermatosis. However, it has also been referred to as Duncan’s Dirty Dermatosis in honor of the physician who initially described this condition in Houston in 1987.[2]

This condition has most often been seen in children, also in adults with equal incidence in males and females. It most commonly involves the neck and trunk followed by limbs, axillary line and pubic regions. The diagnosis is made with a single wipe of the affected area using an alcohol-soaked cotton ball. The dermatosis often wipes off with the pad soaked in 70% alcohol.[3] Differential diagnosis includes acanthosis nigricans, confluent and reticulate papillomatosis of Gougerot and Carteaud, pityriasis versicolor, epidermal nevi, dirty neck syndrome of atopic dermatitis, and dermatitis neglecta.[3]

Terra firma forme dermatosis has always been underreported. It is probably more prevalent than cited in the literature. Our case presented with papillomatous plaque and lesion successfully resolved after the application of 70% isopropyl alcohol. Awareness of Terra firma-forme dermatosis and timely diagnosis prevents unnecessary investigations like biopsy and extensive endocrine evaluation.

References