

Elaiocniosis: An Uncommon Dermatoses of a Common Occupation

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Case Presentation

A 21-year-male presented with complain of an asymptomatic rash over both hands extending to his elbows. Cutaneous examination revealed monomorphic open comedones symmetrically arranged on dorsal aspect of both hands extending to the forearms (Figure 1A). As a mechanic, the patient had frequent exposure to occupational oils and greases. Dermoscopy displayed monomorphic comedoniform black dots arranged in whorls, localized at follicular openings (Figure 1B). The clinical and dermoscopic morphology on the background of associated occupation led to the diagnosis of elaiocniosis. After comedone expression, standard therapy consisting of topical retinoids and urea-containing creams was advised. The patient was counseled regarding use of protective gloves while working and to avoid direct contact with oils and grease.

Teaching Point

Occupational acne is caused by professional contact with chemical substances as well as by the action of environmental physical agents. Potentially all the follicles of the body may be affected [1]. Prolonged contact with oils leads to follicular irritation, with reactive hyperkeratosis and sebum retention leading to formation of such lesions [1]. Elaiocniosis is an acneiform eruption affecting mechanics and metal industry workers exposed to cutting oils [2]. Fortunately, the occurrence of oil acne has declined primarily due to raised awareness, the increased use of gloves and personal protective equipment, and implementation of automated technology.

Elaiocniosis is a substantially underreported occupational dermatosis. Such uncommon presentation can at times be overlooked and lead to delay in treatment. By reporting this case we aim to raise awareness for early diagnosis and treatment of such cases.

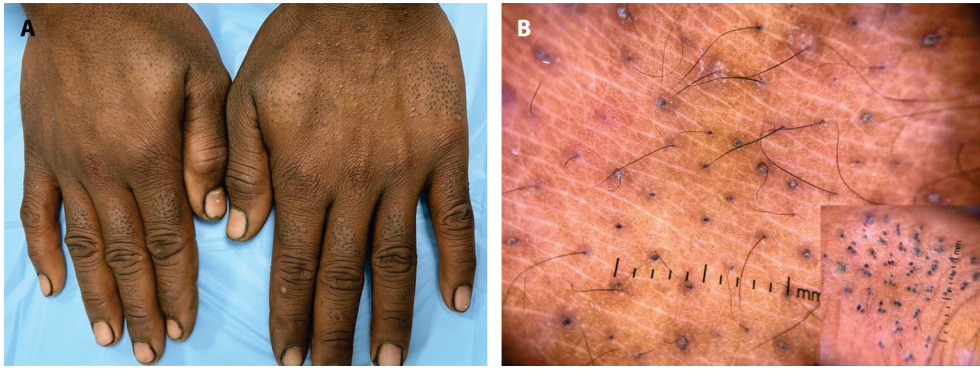


Figure 1. (A) Multiple bilateral symmetrical open comedones on both dorsal hands. (B) Multiple follicular black dots without any background inflammation and in a whorl-like arrangement (inset).

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