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SERPIGINOUS AND PRURITIC DERMATITIS: A CASE REPORT OF CUTANEOUS LARVA MIGRANS

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Abstract

Cutaneous larva migrans, also referred to as serpiginous and/or pruritic dermatitis, is a condition commonly known as "creeping eruption" or "geographic worm." It is an inflammatory skin reaction that occurs in accidental human hosts following the penetration of helminth larvae, primarily *Ancylostoma caninum* and *Ancylostoma brasiliense*, whose definitive hosts are dogs and cats. This study presents a typical case initially misdiagnosed as contact dermatitis "without parasitic involvement." A 23-year-old male student from Recôncavo da Bahia developed intense itching on the buttocks and part of the right thigh after spending a week in Morro de São Paulo (Cairu, Bahia). During a private consultation, a general practitioner diagnosed the condition as a cutaneous allergy and prescribed a topical antihistamine. However, after three days without symptom relief, the patient sought a dermatologist, who identified serpiginous, pruritic lesions with irregular lines. Given the patient's recent exposure to sand, the dermatologist diagnosed migratory cutaneous edema, a presentation consistent with cutaneous larva migrans caused by hookworm larvae migration, without the need for additional tests. The patient was prescribed topical thiabendazole ointment and a single dose of oral ivermectin (two tablets). The lesions were resolved within two weeks. The location of the rash, its characteristic serpentine pattern, and the patient's exposure history were pathognomonic for this parasitic infection. Considering that the initial misdiagnosis delayed effective treatment and that this parasitosis is relevant to One Health, studies on the differential diagnosis of dermatitis—integrating clinical presentation with epidemiological data—are essential for improving patient outcomes.

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