

# Dermatitis Artefacta

**Dermatitis artefacta** is conscious or unconscious self-harm to the skin. It can be an expression of the patient's effort to achieve a certain benefit (incapacity for work, compensation). It most often affects young women.

## Ethiology a Pathogenesis

It arises on a psychopathic or psychiatric basis. Most often, it is the patient's attempt to escape from a difficult situation and to attract attention by self-harming the skin. Damage can occur with the help of nails, various objects, cigarettes, chemicals or heat, application of foreign objects to the skin.

## Clinical picture

The finding is usually atypical to bizarre, with an unusual location, configuration and range of manifestations.

Linear '*excoriations*' from the nails are where the patient reaches, omitting localization between the scapulae. '*Cigarette burns*' have a circular shape and leave pigmentation and scarring. Application of '*foreign substances*' to the subcutaneous tissue can cause paniculitis.

Dermatitis artefacta may be part of '*Münchhausen's syndrome*', where patients report very complex difficulties, often overcoming risky examinations and procedures. Patients are dissatisfied with their care and often change healthcare facilities.

## Diagnosis

The course, anamnesis and appearance do not correspond to known dermatoses. Diagnosis is aided by treatment ineffectiveness, histological findings (eg evidence of foreign material) as well as patient's behavior.

## Differential diagnosis

Includes vasculitis, pityriasis lichenoides, scabies, dermatitis herpetiformis Duhring, granulomatous diseases, lymphocytoma, paniculitis.

## Therapy

It is important to gain the patient's trust and cooperation, to obtain his consent for a consular psychological or psychiatric examination.

## Links

### Used literature

- ŠTORK, Jiří, et al. *Dermatovenerologie*. 1. edition. Praha : Galén, 2008. 502 pp. ISBN 978-80-7262-371-6.

- ws:Dermatitis artefacta



Skin automutilation with cigarettes