

A Red Macular Rash on the Elbow: A Quiz

GEORG AUTHRIED¹ AND MATHIAS TIEDEMANN SVENDSEN²

¹Dermatologist, Landesklinikum Amstetten, Amstetten, Austria, and ²Department of Dermatology and Allergy Centre, Odense University Hospital & Institute of Clinical Research, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark. E-mail: georg.authried@amstetten.lknoe.at



A 42-year-old, otherwise healthy caucasian male attended the dermatology outpatient clinic with a one-month duration of a circumscribed red infiltrated rash on the right elbow (Figs. 1–2). He was afebrile and had no other complaints. There was no past medical history, especially no history of tick bites or injured skin around the elbow.

Within examination a tender, hyperthermic rash with subcutaneous edema on the right elbow was observed.

What is the diagnosis? See next page for answer.



Fig. 1. A red rash above the olecranon.



Fig. 2. Circumscribed red infiltrated rash on the right elbow. Notice discrete oedema.

DIAGNOSIS: OLECRANON BURSITIS

The olecranon bursa is a synovial membrane located posterior to the olecranon bone of the elbow.

A common reason for olecranon bursitis is trauma or infection (1). Apparently, olecranon bursitis can be seen in truck or car drivers, who rest their elbow against the window or the centre console (2).

The patient reported an increased frequency in car driving within the previous months before admission to the department, because of fantastic weather and daily bathing with his family in an Austrian river located 40 kilometers away from his home. He had a tendency to rest his right arm on the centre console while driving his car.

After topical treatment with cool packs and elastic bandages, the tender redness disappeared within the course of two weeks.

The patient was advised to hold the steering wheel with both hands while driving, instead of resting the right arm on the centre console.

If cases with suspicion of infection or a prolonged course, admission to the department of orthopedics is advised (3–4).

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