

Terra Firma-Forme Dermatitis in Jordan: Clinical Insight from a Five-Year Case Series of 38 Patients

Khitam Al-Refu*, Nedal Alnawaiseh**

ABSTRACT

Terra firma-forme dermatosis (TFFD), also known as Duncan's dirty dermatosis, is a benign cutaneous condition characterized by hyper pigmented patches that mimic dirt and resist routine washing but clear instantly with isopropyl alcohol. Although distinct in appearance, it is frequently misdiagnosed, especially in regions where it remains underreported. To describe the clinical presentation, lesion distribution, and diagnostic approach of TFFD in a cohort of patients from Jordan, where awareness of the condition is limited. A retrospective review was conducted of 38 patients diagnosed with TFFD between 2020 and 2025 at two healthcare centres in southern Jordan. Diagnosis was confirmed by alcohol swab test and supported by dermoscopic findings. Demographic data, lesion location, prior misdiagnoses, and treatment outcomes were analysed. Patients ranged in age from 1 year and 2 months to 55 years (mean= 27 years), with a male predominance of 90%. The most commonly affected areas were the neck, face, and scalp. All lesions were resistant to conventional cleansing but resolved immediately with isopropyl alcohol. Several patients had previously received unnecessary treatments before an accurate diagnosis. This study represents the first large case series of TFFD from Jordan. It highlights regional patterns of presentation, emphasizes the value of the alcohol swab test in diagnosis, and calls for increased clinician awareness to prevent misdiagnosis and avoid unnecessary interventions. Further research is recommended to assess the psychosocial impact and actual prevalence of TFFD in Middle Eastern populations.

Keywords: Terra firma-forme dermatosis, Jordan, pigmentation, alcohol swab test, skin discolouration, case series.

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* Professor, Faculty of Medicine, Mutah University
PO Box 5, Karak, Mutah 61710, Jordan
Email: Alrefukhi@yahoo.com ; alrefuki@Mutah.edu.jo.

** Associate Professor of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine
Mutah University, Karak, Mutah 61710, Jordan
Email: nawayseh@gmail.com