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Polymorphous light eruption: an underdiagnosed photodermatosis

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Background & Aim: Polymorphous Light Eruption (PMLE) is an idiopathic recurrent photodermatosis in which a cutaneous rash appears following sunlight exposure. The lesions range from erythematous papules and plaques to erythema multiforme-like lesions and occur in skin surfaces exposed to sunlight, particularly the ones normally covered. It has a 10% prevalence in the United States, it affects women more often than men and the onset usually is in the first 3 decades of life. PMLE has a significant psychosocial impact and can lead to emotional distress. We report this case in order to raise awareness to this underdiagnosed pathology and to show how family doctors can help to improve their patients' life quality.

Results: A 49 year old male, surfer in spare times, with a history of hypertension, dyslipidemia, renal lithiasis, cervical hernia and smoking habits, medicated with amlodipine, telmisartan and atorvastatin presented to his family doctor for a 2 year long skin eruption in his back. The rash was non pruriginous with annular papules ranging from 1 to 2 cm, some of which coalesced forming plaques. The rash worsened in the summer, never disappearing completely in the winter. Considering PMLE, cutaneous B-cell lymphoma, granuloma annulare or urticariform vasculitis we referred the patient to Dermatology. Subsequently a skin biopsy confirmed PMLE and he started prophylaxis with Solderm Ioox® (beta carotene, resveratrol and vitamin D and E). It revealed helpful in the winter because his rash decreased and we are looking forward to evaluate his symptoms in the summer.

Conclusion: A photodermatosis in a patient with frequent sunlight exposure due to his hobby has a significant impact in his psychosocial health. The diagnosis of PMLE allows a suitable approach that decreases the intensity of the rash as well as prevents new flares, minimizing the impact of PMLE on the patient's life.