

Images

Dermal lesions caused by jelly fish

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Jelly fish are creatures that live in the ocean or high seas and have tentacles with tiny organelles (nematocysts) which contain a type of harpoon that injects a poison when they are projected.

The increase in the number of jelly fish observed over recent years is a result of the rise in sea temperatures and waste spills that are left untreated. Some jelly fish species that belong in the Mediterranean have been found off the coast of Galicia (Figure 1).

The lesions have been described as painful and similar to hives; they can cause a burning sensation and may be itchy. Occasionally they are papular or vesicular and in exceptional circumstances, linear scarring has been observed which can last for months until healing begins to take place. The stings may be accompanied by general symptoms which are usually mild (dizziness, vomiting and cramps) and very occasionally

muscular paresis or low blood pressure. Severe allergic reactions following repeated contact with jelly fish have been described, although these are rare. The seriousness of the symptoms depends on the type of jelly fish.

These are images of the skin lesions that a 15-year-old male had after coming into contact with a jelly fish while swimming in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of the Cíes Islands.

A week after the incident he came to the emergency department complaining of persistent linear lesions on his thigh which were red and itchy (Figure 2). Some were infected which was probably caused by scratching. He was treated with a topical corticoid (Mometasone) and made good progress. Five weeks later the affected area was violet-coloured and looked like a faded tattoo. The patient never showed any general symptoms.

REFERENCES

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Figure 1.



Figure 2.