

CUTANEOUS ULCERS CAUSED BY HEROIN INJECTION

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Aim: We present two cases of chronic ulcers of the lower limbs caused by subcutaneous heroin injections ("skin popping"). The patients were a 39- and a 41-year-old males, HIV-positive, each affected by one ulcer on the right thigh and on the right leg, respectively.

Methods: Both patients were subjected to laboratory and instrumental examinations, histopathological examination and microbiological tests.

Results: Both patients improved by stopping heroin injections as well as debridement, specific anti-bacterial therapy and topical therapy with lyophilized powder obtained by bovine tracheal cartilage (one patient) and hydrofibre dressing containing silver ions (one patient).

Conclusion/Discussion: Cutaneous ulcers of the lower limbs caused by heroin injections were very rarely reported in the literature. Common and severe complications are represented by abscesses, cellulitis, panniculitis, scars and hyperpigmentation.