

POIKILODERMA OF CIVATTE

Poikiloderma of Civatte refers to redness and a mottled pigmentation seen on the sides of the neck and chest, more commonly in women. Civatte first described the condition in 1923.

Poikiloderma of Civatte is a rather common, benign condition affecting the skin. The term poikiloderma refers to the combination of atrophy, telangiectasia, and pigmentary changes (both hypopigmentation and hyperpigmentation).

In most patients, the condition is of purely cosmetic concern.

The submental area shaded by the chin usually is spared.

Causes

- Chronic exposure to ultraviolet light appears to be a primary etiologic factor, which is supported by the finding that lesions occur on sun-exposed areas. In addition, solar elastosis is a frequent histopathologic finding.
- Photosensitizing chemicals in perfumes or cosmetics have been implicated in the pathogenesis of Poikiloderma of Civatte.
- Possibly, hormonal changes related to menopause or low estrogen levels may be a factor. Most patients are middle-aged or elderly women.
- Genetic predisposition may exist.

Medical Care

- No specific medical treatment exists for Poikiloderma of Civatte.
- Educating the patient about avoiding sun exposure and the proper use of sunscreens is most important.
- Avoiding perfumes and cosmetics on the area may help.

Surgical Care

- Certain lasers may help.
- However, caution must be exercised because of the higher incidence of adverse effects, such as hypopigmentation and scarring, especially when treating the neck and chest.

Persistent depigmentation as a late adverse event has been reported in a series of patients. Several treatment sessions may be required.