A case report of tinea nigra from North India

Sir,

Tinea nigra is a rare superficial fungal infection of the skin. It is caused by Hortaea werneckii (formerly known as Phaeoannellomyces werneckii, Exophiala werneckii, and Cladosporium werneckii). It occurs most frequently in tropical climates and presents as asymptomatic brown to black nonscaly macules with well-defined borders resembling silver nitrate stains. Macules may be single or multiple, rounded or may have irregular shapes. Palms are most often affected, but lesions may occur on soles or other parts of the body.

A 32-year-old male resident of Pratapgarh (Uttar Pradesh, India) presented in first week of March 2008, with a nine-year history of slowly enlarging asymptomatic hyperpigmented macules on both palms [Figure 1] and soles. Patient gave history of excessive sweating. There was no family history of similar condition.
Letters to the Editor

Tinea nigra has been reported rarely from India. So far, only five cases have been reported [Table 1] and all from South India. Its only reporting from South India may be explained on the basis of the presence of hot and humid conditions there. To the best of our knowledge, the present case is the first case of tinea nigra from North India. This may be due to its actual rarity or due to underreporting.

Topical application of effective antifungal agents usually clears the lesions within two to four weeks. Prolonged therapy may be necessary to prevent relapse. Repeated vigorous scrubbing or topical application of keratolytic agents can reduce pigmentation. Topical terbinafine applied once daily for four weeks successfully cleared the lesions in the present case as has been observed earlier. 

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DOI: 10.4103/0378-6323.55422 -

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