LYMPHOSCINTIGRAPHIC EVALUATION IN PATIENTS
AFTER ERYSIPELAS


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ABSTRACT

Erysipelas (cellulitis/lymphangitis) is a superficial cutaneous infection spread by the lymphatic system which may result in permanent injury to the lymphatic vessels. The study evaluated the lymphatic drainage in the lower limbs of 30 patients with at least two episodes of erysipelas by means of lymphoscintigraphy.

Twenty-two (73%) were female and 8 (27%) were male with ages ranging from 26 to 77 years (mean 52 years). Lymphoscintigraphy was performed by intradermal administration of 500 µCi (20 Mbq) of $^{99m}$Tc antimony sulfur-colloid in two interdigital spaces of the feet. Whole body scintigraphy was performed 45 minutes after the administration of the radiopharmaceutical using a computerized gamma camera. Significant lymphatic abnormalities were found in 23 (77%) of these patients.

We conclude that most patients with repeated erysipelas have significant and even permanent abnormalities in regional lymphatic drainage. Recurrent erysipelas suggests underlying primary or secondary lymphedema.