

Delayed Cutaneous Reaction to a Jellyfish Sting

Reação Cutânea Tardia a Picada de Alforreca

Manuel Bernardo COSTA ¹, Ana Filipa SILVA ², Alberto MOTA ^{1,3,4}
Acta Med Port 2026 Jun-Jul;39(6-7):409-410 • <https://doi.org/10.20344/amp.24463>

Keywords: Bites and Stings; Cnidarian Venoms/adverse effects; Dermatitis/immunology; Hypersensitivity, Delayed; Venom Hypersensitivity
Palavras-chave: Dermatite/imunologia; Hipersensibilidade Tardia; Hipersensibilidade a Veneno; Mordeduras e Picadas; Venenos de Cnidários



Figure 1 – Linear erythematous-violaceous papules at the sites of previous stings



Figure 2 – Complete resolution of the lesions with post-inflammatory hypopigmentation

Jellyfish stings generally cause immediate cutaneous reactions, characterized by pain, erythema, and linear lesions along the trajectory of the tentacles. However, in some cases, reactions to antigens that may persist on the skin can occur.¹⁻³ We report the case of a 58-year-old woman who was stung on the lower limbs during a trip to Thailand, with initial resolution of the lesions. However, four weeks later, pruritic erythematous-violaceous papules developed, strictly confined to the sting sites (Fig. 1). Their onset coincided with increased sun exposure in the preceding days.

Skin biopsy revealed angiocentric dermatitis with a perivascular mononuclear infiltrate. Treatment with betamethasone ointment 0.5 mg/g twice daily was initiated, resulting in progressive improvement and complete resolution after eight weeks (Fig. 2). The clinical picture is consistent with a delayed-type (type IV) hypersensitivity reaction,¹⁻³ possibly triggered by an immunological photo-recall phenomenon. This case highlights the importance of recognizing delayed cutaneous manifestations following contact with jellyfish.

1. Department of Dermatology and Venereology, Unidade Local de Saúde São João, Porto, Portugal.

2. Department of Occupational Health, Unidade Local de Saúde São João, Porto, Portugal.

3. Department of Medicine, Faculdade de Medicina, Universidade do Porto, Porto, Portugal.

4. RISE-Health, Faculdade de Medicina, Universidade do Porto, Porto, Portugal.

✉ **Autor correspondente:** Manuel Bernardo Rodrigues Costa. manuelbernardocosta@gmail.com

Revisado por/Reviewed by: João Teixeira, Pedro Ponte

Recebido/Received: 07/01/2026 - Aceite/Accepted: 16/02/2026 - Publicado Online/Published Online: 24/04/2026 - Publicado/Published: 01/06/2026

Copyright © Ordem dos Médicos 2026



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors declare that no AI tools were used during the preparation of this work.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MBC: Data collection, writing and critical review of the manuscript.

AFS: Data collection, critical review of the manuscript.

AM: Critical review of the manuscript.

All authors approved the final version to be published.

PROTECTION OF HUMANS AND ANIMALS

The authors declare that the procedures were followed according to the regulations established by the Clinical Research and Ethics Committee and to the Helsinki Declaration of the World Medical Association updated in October 2024.

REFERENCES

1. Loredana Asztalos M, Rubin AI, Elenitsas R, Graft MacFarlane C, Castelo-Soccio L. Recurrent dermatitis and dermal hypersensitivity following a jellyfish sting: a case report and review of literature. *Pediatr Dermatol.* 2014;31:217-9.
2. Curatolo R, Madanchi M, Juratli HA. Delayed-type hypersensitivity reaction to jellyfish. *Internat J Dermatol.* 2024;63:818-9.
3. Tibballs JA, Yanagihara AC, Turner H, Winkel K. Immunological and toxicological responses to jellyfish stings. *Inflamm Allergy Drug Targets.* 2011;10:438-46.

DATA CONFIDENTIALITY

The authors declare having followed the protocols in use at their working center regarding patients' data publication.

PATIENT CONSENT

Obtained.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

MC received support for attending meetings and/or travel from Leo Pharma, Cantabria Labs, Novartis, SVR and Loreal.

All other authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

FUNDING SOURCES

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.