

Hot Tub Folliculitis in Athletes

Background

1. Common during rehabilitation treatments using hot tubs
2. Typically self-limited condition lasting 7-10 days
3. No limitation on participation
 - Lesions should be covered with occlusive dressing before using hot tubs

Pathophysiology

1. Pathology of disease
 - *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* subtype O:11
2. Risk factors
 - Skin abrasions
 - Inadequate chlorination of hot tubs

Diagnostics

1. History
 - Recent use of hot tubs
 - Pruritic lesions
 - Systemic symptoms: fever, chills, lymphadenopathy
2. Physical exam
 - Well defined follicular lesions, may be green
 - More common in areas covered by bathing suits

Differential Diagnosis

1. Impetigo
2. Acne
3. Cellulitis
4. Scabies
5. Insect bites
6. Miliaria rubra

Therapeutics

1. Supportive treatment with anti-pruritics
2. No treatment needed if no systemic involvement
3. Immunocompromised athlete or those with systemic symptoms:
 - Ciprofloxacin 500mg BID for 7 days

Prevention

1. Adequate chlorination and pH regulation of hot tubs
2. Cover abrasions/cuts with occlusive dressings

References

1. Adams BB. Dermatologic disorders of the athlete. *Sports Med.* 2002; 32(5):309-21.
2. Freiman A, Barankin B, Elpem DJ. Sports dermatology part 2: swimming and other aquatic sports. *CMAJ.* 2004 Nov 23; 171(11):1339-41. Review.

Author: Lisa Kafchinski, RN, *University of Nevada Reno FPRP*

Editor: Carol Scott, MD, *University of Nevada Reno FPRP*