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## ANSWER: ERYSIPELAS

Erysipelas is an acute infection of epidermis and superficial dermis which commonly affects old and immune-compromised people and also young children.<sup>1</sup> It was a common condition years ago that had nearly disappeared with advent of antimicrobials and recently it is found that incidence of erysipelas is increasing.<sup>2</sup>

Erysipelas is also known as **St Anthony's Fire** due to presence of intense fiery rash.<sup>2,3</sup> It is named as 'St Antony Fire' as it was believed that only St Antony, who was a monk centuries ago, could cure this condition.<sup>1</sup> The risk factors for erysipelas include diabetes, alcoholism, malignancy, corticosteroid therapy etc.<sup>4</sup>

It is most commonly caused by beta hemolytic streptococcus though other variety of bacteria, can also cause it.<sup>1,2</sup>

Patient's usually presents with erythema, edema, pain along with local rise of temperature and has systemic symptoms like malaise, fever and shivering.<sup>4</sup> It affects lower limb and face frequently and may involve lymphatics.<sup>2</sup> The diagnosis of erysipelas often overlaps with cellulitis and many times a definite distinction in the two entities cannot be made.<sup>3</sup> It is often recommended that both these diseases should be considered as single one.<sup>4</sup> Erysipelas has raised demarcated edges whereas cellulitis has more diffuse margins.

Diagnosis is clinical and mainstay of treatment is antibiotics with penicillin group of drugs often preferred as first choice. Prognosis is excellent though recurrence could be as high as 20%.<sup>1</sup> Few patients may have complications like septicemia and necrotizing fasciitis which may require surgical interven-

tion.<sup>1</sup>

## REFERENCES

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