Letter to the Editor

**Erythema Nodosum Currently Is Not a Proven Complication of Jellyfish Stings**

Dear Cutis:
The article, “Aquatic Antagonists: Portuguese Man-of-war (Physalia physalis)” (Cutis. 2007;80:186-188), commented that erythema nodosum was reported following jellyfish envenomation in an article from The Journal of Emergency Medicine.1 Auerbach and Hays1 did not mention in the abstract that the patient did not see the jellyfish sting her, did not feel pain, did not develop an eruption for more than a day, was not seen by a dermatologist, and never had a lesional biopsy. These negative points found in the text of the article leave the diagnosis of jellyfish-induced erythema nodosum open to question.

Erythema nodosum is a clinical complex caused by a number of diseases. The acceptance of an entity as a cause should be rigidly controlled to prevent physicians from jumping to the wrong diagnosis. Because no documented cases of jellyfish-induced erythema nodosum have been reported in the past 20 years, the link between jellyfish stings and erythema nodosum is absent. Despite these facts, The Journal of Emergency Medicine article has been listed as an etiology for erythema nodosum in journal and text reviews. The book Poisonous and Venomous Marine Animals: A Medical and Biological Handbook classifies jellyfish-induced erythema nodosum as a mystery syndrome because of its nebulous causality, which appears to be a reasonable step, pending further corroboration.2

Sincerely,
Joseph W. Burnett, MD
Baltimore, Maryland

The author reports no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

**Author Response**
The likely association of erythema nodosum and Portuguese man-of-war (Physalia physalis) was based on the patient’s serologic response. Serologic testing demonstrated marked elevation of IgG and IgM against P physalis, suggesting that the jellyfish was indeed Portuguese man-of-war.1

Sincerely,
Dirk M. Elston, MD
Danville, Pennsylvania

The author reports no conflict of interest.

REFERENCE