

## Dark, Round Areas on the Back

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A 19-year-old male presents with dark, round areas on his back of several months duration. They are asymptomatic. He has tried polysporin with no benefit, as well as several other creams recommended to him by his pharmacist.

### What is your Diagnosis?

The patient has atrophoderma of Pasini and Pierini. This is a benign, idiopathic, and asymptomatic condition that results in atrophic skin with sharply defined oval areas of hyperpigmentation on the trunk. The etiopathogenesis of these lesions is unclear, and it may simply be a superficial or abortive variant of morphea (localized scleroderma); there are some studies suggesting an association with *Borrelia burgdorferi* infection or lyme disease, particularly in Europe.

This condition often presents in adolescence or early adulthood with asymptomatic, slightly erythematous (1 to 10 cm) lesions on the back. Within one to two weeks, these lesions develop a gray-brown pigmentation. Eventually, pigmentation lightens and the involved skin becomes depressed with a “cliff-like” border.



Figure 1: Dark, Round Areas on the Back

No specific laboratory tests are needed (occasionally, lyme serology based on possible history of exposure is used), and skin biopsy is warranted to confirm the diagnosis and rule out other conditions, such as postinflammatory hyperpigmentation, morphea, or anetoderma. Treatment has been historically frustrating, although there appears to be a benefit with the use of certain laser therapies and oral antibiotics in some patients.

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