

Cultural Practices and Dermatoses

Neelam A. Vashi
Editor

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*This book is dedicated to my greatest creations,
Ethan and Ava, who will forever be my babies.*

Preface

Cultural Practices and Dermatoses is a comprehensive text that examines specific dermatologic disease as it presents within a cultural context. As societies of the world become increasingly intertwined, both our local and far-reaching demographics diversify and cross-cultural exchange becomes commonplace. Physicians are rarely taught how cultural differences can affect disease presentation in patients. Without exposure to patients of varying backgrounds, it can be nearly impossible to learn about practices that may influence a patient's health. A well-known example of this in dermatology is mistaking cupping lesions as evidence of abuse. There are many more, less well-known examples of cultural practices causing dermatologic lesions, and it is becoming increasingly more likely that practicing dermatologists will encounter patients with these findings as migration, tourism, and public interest continue to rise. Patients are increasingly likely to try alternative therapies, particularly for chronic skin diseases. Dermatologists will need an understanding of the risks and benefits of these therapies in order to successfully counsel their patients.

Because of the breadth of knowledge that must be taught during medical school and residency, culture-specific disease findings are rarely included in curricula as compared with other topics. The practice of indigenous traditions is not limited to isolated territories. Dermatologists not studying or practicing in a highly multiethnic center may not be exposed to patients from many cultures. Although some cultural practices, such as acupuncture and threading, are widely used, there is limited medical literature describing their cutaneous

effects and complications. This text aims to help dermatologists with the challenges involved in treating those from different backgrounds. I am forever grateful to my contributors for the hard work and dedication that were shared for this contribution to our dermatologic literature.

Boston, MA, USA

Neelam A. Vashi

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