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Recurrent headache and facial ecchymosis: a case of dermatitis artefacta?

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Sir,

I read the case recently published as an image gallery in the Journal about a 22 year-old woman, who developed transient and relapsing facial ecchymosis during attacks of trigeminal cephalalgias [1]. As laboratory and imaging were unremarkable, the authors suggested that the cutaneous symptoms "may result from blood extravasation to skin due to trigemino-vascular activation and autonomic vascular dysfunction". Upon examination of the clinical photographic features, the patient displays a striking dark-red, well-delimited, sometimes linear streak of the right cheek, extending to the neck up to the upper chest. The lesions do not follow traction or Blaschko lines. They extend roughly through the trigeminal V2-V3 territories, as well as cervical C3 and C4, and possibly T1 territories. Such geographic presentation is rather evocative of self-inflicted skin lesions [2]. The patient may have applied something on the skin in a desperate

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attempt to alleviate the pain during the painful crises or we are here in a case of cutaneous factitious disorder, as dermatologists happen to see [3].

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