
FEBRUARY IOTADERMA (#324)

Dermatology is blessed (or cursed, depending on your point of view) with diseases that have gorgeously descriptive polysyllabic names. Can you remember a condition whose name is 25 syllables long (without its eponym), and one that contains only a mere 18? (Hint: they both involve the follicular unit.) I will wager that you are over the age of 60 if you answer correctly!

Robert I. Rudolph, MD, FACP

Answer will appear in the *JAAD* Online section of the March issue.

JANUARY IOTADERMA (#323)

Question: Do you know to what the term **Asian glow** is, what its cause is, and what therapy can help mitigate it?

Answer: Asian glow (also called **Asian flush**) is a colloquial name for the alcohol flushing syndrome (AFS). AFS is a genetic condition caused by a number of polymorphisms in the enzymes alcohol dehydrogenase or aldehyde dehydrogenase which are found in 20% to 47% of individuals of East Asian descent.¹ AFS is characterized by the sudden occurrence of full-face confluent erythema and flushing (commonly accompanied by a burning sensation in the skin) after some oral alcohol consumption. The flushing can be the result of a very small amount of ingestion. The reaction can be both socially unattractive and limiting. Successful therapy has recently been obtained by using topical bromonidine.² A recent meta-analysis review revealed that in patients with AFS there might be a higher incidence of esophageal cancer than in unaffected individuals.³ Sadly, at this time the only way for an affected person to truly prevent the reaction is to not drink any alcohol.

REFERENCES

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2. Yu WY, Lu B, Tan D, et al. Effect of topical brimonidine on alcohol-induced flushing in Asian individuals: a randomized clinical trial. *JAMA Dermatol*. 2019;156(2):182-185.
3. Andrici J, Hu SXH, Eslick GD. Facial flushing response to alcohol and the risk of esophageal squamous cell carcinoma: a comprehensive systematic review and meta-analysis. *Cancer Epidemiol*. 2016;40:31-38.

Robert I. Rudolph, MD, FACP
