

## Special Feature:

### Cutaneous manifestations of pellagra in a patient with rheumatoid arthritis

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A 48-year-old lady presented with dusky brown to dark coloured rash on sun exposed parts of her both upper limbs of 3 weeks duration (Figure 1). She was also having 3- 4 episodes of watery stools per day. She had no depressive or dementia symptoms. Her rash was mildly itchy. She is known to have rheumatoid arthritis for the last one year and was receiving oral corticosteroid treatment. A diagnosis of pellagra dermatitis was made clinically and she was started on intravenous multivitamin injection containing niacinamide 100 mg/ day for 5 days followed by oral multivitamin tablets containing niacinamide 50 mg per day.

Pellagra means “skin that is rough”. Pellagra was first described by Gaspar Casal a Spanish



**Figure 1:** Clinical photograph showing dark coloured rash on sun exposed part of right upper limb

court Physician in 1762.<sup>1</sup> Pellagra is characterized by 4‘D’s: photosensitive dermatitis, diarrhoea, dementia and death.<sup>2</sup> The disease is common in malnourished individuals, chronic alcoholics, as a complication of isoniazid therapy and food faddists.<sup>3,4</sup> Though the condition is common, diagnosis is often overlooked or delayed resulting in life threatening complications. If pellagra is diagnosed and treated appropriately the prognosis for recovery is excellent.

#### REFERENCES

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