

Buerger's disease is vasculitis causing insufficient blood flow to the hands and feet, producing numbness, tingling and ultimately skin and gangrene. The classic Buerger's patient is a male, between the ages of 20 and 40, although there is a higher percentage of women and people over the age of 50 being diagnosed. Buerger's disease is most common in the Orient, Southeast Asia, India and the Middle East, but appears to be rare among African-Americans.

Diagnosis: Angiograms of the extremities is helpful in making the diagnosis. Skin biopsies are not recommended due to the concern that the biopsy site will not heal.

Treatment: Buerger's disease is associated with smoking and tobacco products. Patients **must stop smoking** immediately. Abstinence from these products is the only way to treat this disease. Although anti-inflammatory agents (steroids) have proven beneficial in other vasculitides, they are not beneficial in treating Buerger's.