

## An Asymptomatic Chest Lesion

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A 47-year-old male presents with an asymptomatic, pigmented lesion on his chest of several years duration. He has had several such lesions removed before, but he doesn't think he has ever had skin cancer, and there is no family history of skin cancer.

### What is your Diagnosis?

The patient has a dysplastic nevus. This nevus is clinically atypical (and histopathologically dysplastic) with a dark centre and a lighter rim of colour. The concern is that it may be difficult to distinguish from an early melanoma, hence, a biopsy or excision is warranted. Atypical nevi can be sporadic or familial. An atypical nevus, or "funny looking mole," will have several features, such as asymmetry, border irregularity (e.g., jagged, fuzzy), colour variegation (multiple colours or very dark colour), and a diameter of  $\geq 6$  mm.

Atypical or dysplastic nevi are more common in fair skinned individuals and in those with freckles and light eyes. Most of these nevi develop in the first 18-years-of-life. Since these lesions may be difficult to distinguish from a melanoma, a biopsy or excision is reasonable, especially if the lesion is changing (getting bigger or darker) or the patient



Figure 1: An Asymptomatic Chest Lesion

has a family history of melanoma. Patients with these lesions should be counselled on what worrisome features to look for. They should avoid tanning salons, mid-day sun (when possible), and getting sunburned and should wear a hat, sunglasses, and use sunscreen when it is sunny.

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