



Papules Under the Eyes

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A 34-year-old female is bothered by the appearance of papules under her eyes. She mentions that an aunt had similar asymptomatic, flesh-coloured papules which increased in number over time. She is otherwise very healthy.

1. What is the most likely diagnosis?

- Fordyce glands
- Flat warts
- Apocrine hidrocystomas
- Syringomas
- Milia

2. With what disease or syndrome are these lesions associated with?

- Down syndrome
- Neurofibromatosis
- Tuberous sclerosis
- McCune-Albright syndrome
- All of the above

3. How could you manage this lesion?

- Reassurance as to benign nature
- Laser ablation
- Electrodesiccation
- Surgical excision
- All of the above

Syringomas are considered benign adnexal tumours. They are fairly common lesions more commonly affecting females and predominantly of cosmetic concern. Lesions first appear around the time of puberty.


Syringomas are asymptomatic, flesh-coloured



Figure 1. Papules under the eyes.

to yellow, small dermal papules. They can occasionally appear translucent. The surface is either flat-topped or round and lesions are typically < 4 mm in diameter. Syringomas are distributed symmetrically in clusters, particularly involving the lower eyelids and upper cheeks. Other less commonly affected areas include the axilla, chest, abdomen and genitals. They have been associated with Down syndrome.

Where uncertain, histopathology is valuable which reveals a superficial dermal tumour with multiple small ducts in a sclerotic stroma.

Patients can be reassured as to the benign nature of these lesions and treatment is considered cosmetic. The goal of therapy is scar-free destruction of lesions. Syringomas can be excised, electrodesiccated, curetted, dermabraded or resurfaced with a carbon dioxide or Erbium-YAG laser. 

Answers: 1-d; 2-a; 3-e

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