



Flesh-Coloured Papulonodules

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A 21-year-old university student complains of gradual onset of lesions on the trunk of several years duration. He is becoming more self-conscious about his problem. Sometimes, the lesions become infected and rupture, leaving a malodorous discharge. There are no other affected family members.

Examination reveals multiple flesh-coloured and yellow dermal papulonodules on the chest and arms. The majority of lesions measure < 1 cm.

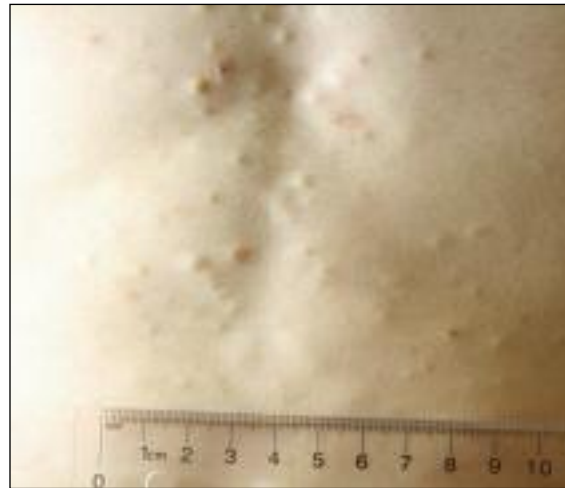


Figure 1. Gradual onset of lesions on the trunk.

What is your diagnosis?

- a. Multiple lipomatosis
- b. Neurofibromatosis
- c. Steatocystoma multiplex
- d. Mastocytosis

Answer: Steatocystoma multiplex (SM)

About SM


SM is an uncommon disorder of the pilosebaceous unit characterized by multiple sebaceous cysts on the body. It may occur on a sporadic basis or autosomal dominant pattern of inheritance. Defects on keratin 17 gene have been discovered in inherited cases.

Clinically, SM tends to present in adolescence and early adulthood. Hormonal influence from androgens is postulated to stimulate sebaceous gland activity. Significant psychological impairment in patients may develop due to its appearance. There is no racial predilection and

both sexes are equally affected.

The major differential diagnosis includes eruptive vellus hair cysts which do not display sebaceous glands on pathology.

Treatment

Treatment involves excision of individual lesions. Options include cryosurgery, needle aspiration and incision followed by curettage. CO₂ laser surgery has been reported with good results. Some lesions may spontaneously become inflamed and/or infected and lead to permanent scarring. Topical and oral antibiotics such as tetracycline may be required. Isotretinoin may be of help since it decreases the size and sebum production of sebaceous glands. 

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