



Multiple Nodules and Papules

Amanda N. Webb, BScH; and Richard Langley, MD, FRCPC

A 29-year-old female presents with multiple recurrent nodules, inflammatory papules and evidence of comedones present on the medial thighs bilaterally, the axilla, and the lower abdomen. The patient is planning to become pregnant and is currently not following the topical antibiotic therapy that she was trying in the past.

1. What is the most likely diagnosis?

- Lymphadenitis
- Hidradenitis suppurativa
- Lymphogranuloma venereum
- Donovanosis
- Scrofuloderma

2. This lesion is more common in people with which of the following?

- Obesity
- Cystic acne
- Pilonidal sinus
- All of the above

3. How could you manage these lesions?

- Systemic antibiotics
- Intralesional glucocorticoids
- Surgery
- Phototherapy
- a, b, and c


Hidradenitis suppurativa is a chronic disease of the apocrine glands that is characterized by inflammatory nodules, papules, and often comedones and double comedones in the axillae and anogenital region. It is thought to be caused by keratinous plugging of apocrine ducts leading to duct dilation, as well as inflammatory changes supporting bacterial growth. Bacteria that often colonize the lesions



Figure 1: Lesions on patient's skin

include: *Escherichia coli*, *Proteus mirabilis*, and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.

Patients with hidradenitis suppurativa range from having mild self-limiting diseases to chronic, recalcitrant and progressive involvement. Often, mild cases heal on their own and do not require treatment. Patients with severe hidradenitis suppurativa require treatment for chronic pain, draining sinuses, scarring, restricted mobility, and associated depression.

Management options include a combination of topical or oral antibiotics, intralesional glucocorticoids (triamcinolone), surgical excision, and oral isotretinoin. Recently, TNF α antagonists (Infliximab) have been used and have provided a moderate benefit. 

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

Ms. Webb is a First Year Medical Student at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Dr. Langley is a Dermatologist, and Professor and Director of Research, Division of Dermatology, Department of Medicine, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.