



Asymptomatic Whitish Papule

A 50-year-old female presents with an asymptomatic whitish papule of two years duration on the the right side of the face. She is otherwise in good health and not on medication.



Questions

1. What is the diagnosis?
2. What is the significance?
3. What is the treatment?

Answers

1. The diagnosis is milium.
2. A milium is a small (generally < 3 mm), white, benign, dome-shaped, superficial keratinous cyst. Histologically, a milium appears as a small infundibular cyst that is lined with stratified squamous epithelium with a granular cell layer. Primary milia may be congenital (congenital primary milia) or have onset later on in life (benign primary milia of children and adults). While congenital primary milia favor the nose, benign primary milia of children and adults favor the eyelids, as is illustrated in the present case. Secondary milia may occur in association with disease (*e.g.*, epidermolysis bullosa, porphyria cutanea tarda, *etc.*), medication (*e.g.*, oral cyclosporine, penicillamine, 5-fluorouracil, topical corticosteroids, *etc.*), or trauma (dermabrasion, chemical peels, burns, skin grafts, tattoos).
3. Although primary milia of adults are benign, they tend to persist. For persistent lesions, treatment options include simple mechanical evacuation or extraction, topical retinoids (for very small milia or when many are present), electrodesiccation, or CO₂ laser vaporization.

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