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Angiofibroma

Cutaneous angiofibromas are a group of benign dermatological lesions that present in various forms, each with distinct clinical manifestations, yet share similar histological characteristics. These lesions can be classified into nonhereditary and hereditary types, with the latter often associated with systemic syndromes. Common forms include the fibrous papule, pearly penile papules, and multiple facial angiofibromas seen in hereditary conditions such as tuberous sclerosis complex.

Clinical Presentations

Fibrous papules represent the solitary, nonhereditary form of cutaneous angiofibromas. These lesions typically appear as small, round, skin-colored to reddish papules, often found on the face, particularly on the nose. Clinically, fibrous papules may resemble other dermatological entities such as moles, basal cell carcinomas, or adnexal tumors. Although these papules are benign, their appearance can raise concerns for more serious conditions, requiring careful differentiation. The treatment of fibrous papules is often conservative, with shaving of the lesion flush to the skin being curative in most cases. Recurrence is rare following excision.

Pearly penile papules are another form of nonhereditary angiofibromas, typically appearing as small, dome-shaped, pearly, pale papules that aggregate in a circumferential pattern around the glans penis. These lesions are more common in uncircumcised men and are most often seen in men between the ages of 20 and 30. Clinically, pearly penile papules can be confused with other genital lesions, such as condyloma acuminata or sebaceous hyperplasia. However, no treatment is necessary for pearly penile papules as they are a benign and self-limited condition.

In contrast, multiple facial angiofibromas are a characteristic feature of several hereditary syndromes, most notably tuberous sclerosis complex (TSC). TSC is a genetic disorder that leads to the formation of benign tumors in multiple organs, including the skin, brain, and kidneys. Facial angiofibromas in TSC are often present in the nasolabial folds, cheeks, and forehead, and can sometimes be found on the nails as well. The presence of more than three facial angiofibromas and two or more nail angiofibromas is one of the major diagnostic criteria for TSC.

While the fibrous papule and pearly penile papules are generally non problematic, the presence of multiple facial angiofibromas, especially in the context of tuberous sclerosis, warrants further investigation to rule out systemic involvement and associated complications.

Conclusion

Cutaneous angiofibromas encompass a spectrum of benign lesions with distinct clinical presentations but similar features. Fibrous papules and pearly penile papules are nonhereditary and generally require no treatment, while multiple facial angiofibromas are associated with hereditary syndromes like tuberous sclerosis complex, which may require systemic management.

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