

CASE REPORT

CUTANEOUS HORNS

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INTRODUCTION

Cutaneous horn is a rare and curious clinical entity. It is a clinical term used for a hard and elongated structure consisting of keratin and growing on the skin like the ones seen on the heads of cows, sheep etc. It is associated with different types of histologic lesions found at the base of the horn. The base should be carefully examined to see for any such lesion which may include malignancy as well.

CASE REPORT

A 60-year old female visited a private clinic with complaint of multiple horns on the right ear. These horns had started 15 years back and slowly grown to the present size. Physical examination revealed 6 horns on the right ear measuring 2.5 to 3.0 cm in length and 0.5 to 1.0 cm in breadth at their bases. These were firm in consistency. History and physical examination did not reveal any other significant finding. Routine urine examination and full blood count were within normal ranges. The horns were surgically excised and two of them were sent to the Department of Pathology, Ayub Medical College, Abbottabad for pathologic examination. On gross examination, the horns were 2.0 and 2.5 cm long and 1.5 and 1.0 cm wide respectively at their bases. Both of them were bifid and truncated at their apices (Figure-1) Light microscopic examination of the H&E stained sections revealed that the horns consisted of thick well-formed keratin (Figure-2). There were a few underlying viable cells which showed abrupt transition to keratin. The basal border of the horn was smooth. So far, two years having passed after excision, the horns have not recurred.

DISCUSSION

Cutaneous horn is a clinical term used for a hard and elongated structure consisting of keratin and growing on the skin like the ones seen on the heads of cows, sheep etc. It is not a pathologic term and hence does not refer to any specific pathologic lesion. It is associated with different types of pathologic lesions found at the base of the horn. The lesions reported include solar keratosis, filiform verruca, seborrheic keratosis, Squamous cell carcinoma, trichilemmoma, basal cell carcinoma, sebaceous carcinoma, HIV-related molluscum contagiosum, granular cell tumour, cutaneous leishmaniasis, Paget's disease of the breast, chronic discoid lupus erythematosus,

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FIGURE-1



Gross appearance of the Cutaneous Horn

FIGURE-2



Microscopic appearance of the Cutaneous Horns.

metastatic renal cell carcinoma and pyogenic granuloma.¹⁴

The disorder may also occur in animals.

Mann and Russell (1991) provide an illustration of a cutaneous horn of the forehead in a water cress seller in Paris and this became a favourite illustration of their textbook.⁵

Walter and Israel (1979) mention cutaneous horn as an example of dystrophy of the skin.⁶

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