

## Familial Acne Keloidalis

Sir,

Acne keloidalis is a chronic inflammatory process involving the hair follicles of the nape of the neck and leading to hypertrophic scarring in papules and plaques (1). Cases are usually sporadic and there are no previous reports of familial occurrence. We report acne keloidalis affecting 4 members of a North Indian Sindhi family.

### CASE REPORT

A 38-year-old man had had multiple irregularly arranged firm keratotic follicular papules just above the posterior hair-line since he was 18 years old. The papules had coalesced to form a firm to hard plaque about 8 × 4 cm. In addition there were a few, discrete, firm, follicular papules adjacent to the main plaque. Some of these papules were capped by yellowish and hemorrhagic crusts. Biopsy from the plaque showed epidermal hyperkeratosis and a dense chronic inflammation in the upper and mid dermis, most marked around hair follicles. The inflammatory infiltrate consisting of lymphocytes, histiocytes and plasma cells extended into the hair follicles, causing follicular destruction. Some follicles showed partial destruction while others showed loss of hair shafts and replacement by epithelioid cell granulomas and foreign body giant cells. Concentric fibrosis was seen around the more completely destroyed hair follicles.

His father, aged 75 years, and 2 brothers aged 42 and 34 years (Fig. 1), were reported to have similar lesions at the same site which had also

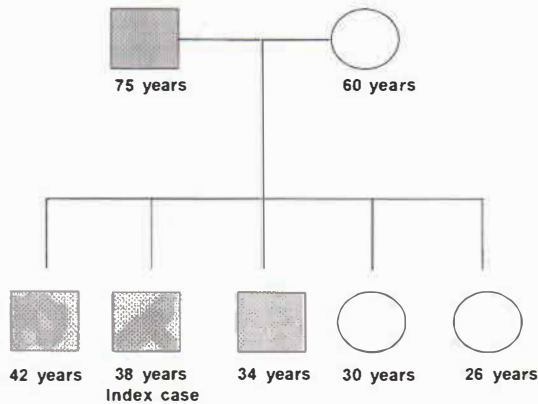


Fig. 1. Family tree of the patient. Affected male: ■ unaffected female: ○.

begun when they were approximately 18–20 years old. The father and older brother had had the lesions surgically excised. Examination of these individuals revealed linear surgical scars at the nape of the neck with a few scattered firm papules. The younger brother had a solitary, firm, irregular 2 × 2 cm plaque with areas of crusting on the nape. None of the family members had hidradenitis suppurativa.

Dermabrasion was attempted on the patient's lesions and after 3 sittings there was about 50% reduction in size. However, he was unwilling to attend for subsequent sessions and was referred to the surgery department for excision.

### COMMENT

Acne keloidalis is a rare condition restricted to adult males. It is characterized by follicular papules and pustules which enlarge forming confluent thickened plaques. Scarring is common. There is considerable variation in the severity and extent of scarring from one patient to the other. The exact etiology and the cause of the localization to the nape of the neck are unknown, though friction from collar and penetration of cut hair into the skin which is closely shaven has been suggested (1, 2). No specific organism has been isolated. To the best of our knowledge no familial cases have been reported so far. The occurrence of acne keloidalis in several members of the family and at approximately the same age is of interest. A role for genetic factors has been suggested in acne vulgaris (3), but acne keloidalis is believed to be a completely unrelated condition. A genetic predisposition to the latter condition may be operative in some individuals.

### REFERENCES

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