

Importance of nasal lesions in Chinese patients

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A 77-year-old Chinese woman presented with a crusty lesion on the bridge nose for 2 months.



Figure 1 : Crusty lesion over nose

1. What is your next step ?

- A. Lesional skin punch biopsy
- B. Shave biopsy
- C. Shave excision
- D. Something else

Answer D. As the differential diagnosis is not merely skin cancer, a full history, a full skin and mucosal examination are indicated.

2. The patient admits recent mouth sores. How would you best examine the patient ?

- A. Head light
- B. Spatula
- C. Pen light
- D. Phone light
- E. Throat Scope

Answer E : Any of these are suitable with adequate lighting but we find the throat scope very useful as it is made of a lamp and a single use plastic stick. It gives you a clear overview of the oral mucosa using only one hand, allowing the operator to use their other hand to use a device to photograph, sample or treat any lesions.

3. Erosions on the palate were seen. What is your first choice for the nasal lesion now ?



Figure 2 : Erosions over the palate

- A. Basal cell carcinoma
- B. Impetiginization
- C. Squamous cell carcinoma
- D. Squamous cell carcinoma in situ
- E. Pemphigus vulgaris

Answer E. Even though the patient was over 70 years old, she is from a Chinese background meaning that she is less likely to develop a skin cancer. Therefore, additional possibilities should be sought before the excision of the lesion.

4. What kind of biopsy would you do ?

- A. Lesional skin biopsy
- B. Perilesional skin biopsy
- C. Shave biopsy
- D. Shave excision

Answers A + B : Lesional biopsy with sample in formalin as routine for histopathology. Perilesional skin biopsy with sample in Michel's medium for direct immunofluorescence as pemphigus vulgaris is the most likely diagnosis. Bear in mind that the nose shape is important in Chinese culture. Excision of an undiagnosed lesion should be avoided.