Nodular Sebaceous Gland Hyperplasia

General Information

Nodular sebaceous gland hyperplasia is the result of excessive cell division within a sebaceous gland that results in a visible growth on the skin. Clinically these growths will present as small, round, and hairless mounds with a yellowish-white coloration and a waxy or shiny appearance. These types of hyperplasia may be easily mistaken for viral warts, sebaceous gland epitheliomas, sebaceous gland adenomas and sebaceous gland carcinomas. They can occur anywhere on the body, though they more commonly found on the head, ears, face and legs. More than one gland may be affected in some cases. The affected glands will commonly be grouped together horizontally, forming a plaque on the skin.

Risk Factors

This type of sebaceous growth is largely considered a cosmetic defect associated with aging. It is not uncommon for elderly dogs to develop one or more of these growths. Poodles, Cocker Spaniels, Manchester Terriers and Wheaten Terriers are more commonly affected than other breeds. There is some speculation that these areas hyperplasia may eventually give rise to a benign sebaceous gland tumor.
**Treatment**

Due to its physical similarity to other types of sebaceous tumors, a differential diagnosis can be only be obtained via histopathology. The veterinarian will submit a biopsy or cytology sample to a veterinary pathologist. The preferred treatment for nodular sebaceous hyperplasia in companion animals is the surgical removal of the growth. Typically removal is only medically recommended if the area is affected by secondary infection and inflammation, is bleeding, or if the location of the growth interferes with the normal behavior of the pet. Their small size makes them fairly easy to remove with local anesthetic. This can be a benefit for older pets, whose age and overall health can make them poor candidates for general anesthesia.

**Prognosis**

Nodular sebaceous hyperplasia is not considered to be a tumor. Though the hyperplasia will not resolve on its own, complete excision is typically curative and the prognosis is excellent.
Comparative Aspects

Older cats are known to develop the same nodular sebaceous hyperplasia in the skin of the head and abdomen. There are no breed predispositions, however females develop these growths more frequently than male cats.

In people, sebaceous hyperplasia is common in older men and only occasionally in children. Affected individuals will have multiple crater-like bumps, on the skin of the face, chest or genitals. Though benign and asymptomatic, these enlarged sebaceous glands will not regress on their own and treatment is necessary for removal.
References


