Sebaceous Glands in the Esophagus

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Introduction

- Sebaceous glands are small exocrine glands which secrete an oily substance called sebum.
- Derived from the ectoderm, they are generally found distributed over the body's skin near hair follicles and are found most commonly on the scalp and face.
- Occasionally, sebaceous glands can also be found in other areas, including the eyes, palms, soles, genitalia, and parotid glands.
- However, the presence of sebaceous glands in endodermal organs is extremely rare.
- Here, we report a case of ectopic sebaceous glands found in the esophagus.

Initial Presentation

HPI: A 45-year-old female presented to the gastroenterology clinic for chronic reflux and cough. She reported having these symptoms for several decades and received moderate symptom control with a proton pump inhibitor.

Past Medical History: asthma
Past Surgical History: none
Medications: proton pump inhibitor and metoclopramide
Allergies: none
Social History: no tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, or other recreational drug use
Family History: unknown

Physical Exam: Vital signs were normal. Abdominal exam normal.

Work up

- A complete blood count and comprehensive metabolic panel were within normal ranges.
- To further evaluate her symptoms, she underwent an EGD.
- Endoscopic evaluation revealed numerous non-scrapable off-white nodules in the mid- and distal esophagus (Figure 1).
- Cytology was negative for fungal organisms; however, biopsies revealed squamous mucosa with ectopic sebaceous glands.

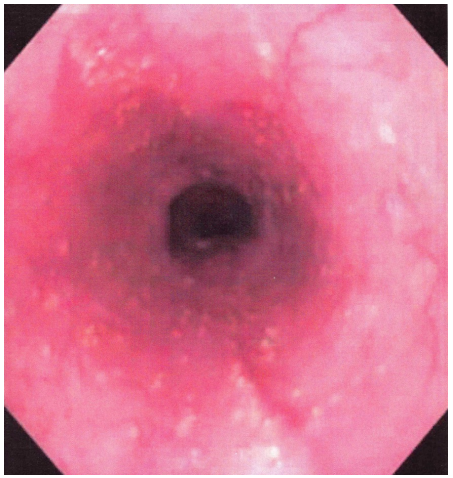

Figure 1: Tiny off-white nodules in the mid- and distal esophagus.

Discussion

- Ectopic sebaceous glands of the esophagus are an extremely rare finding.
- Found incidentally on endoscopy, it can look similar to candidiasis, xanthomas, or metastatic carcinoma, and thus biopsies should be taken to make a diagnosis.
- Although some patients have been noted to have symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux disease, ectopic sebaceous glands are thought to not have any clinical symptoms.
- Furthermore, the finding is benign and there is no known risk of malignant transformation.