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PEARLY PENILE PAPULES

WHAT IS THIS?

This is a benign condition – 50% of males have this condition. Females also have an equivalent condition in the vagina termed vestibular papillomatosis. In males, multiple bumps are present around the rim of the penis (corona). Some patients may only have a few bumps whereas others may have dozens of small bumps crowded on the corona encircling the head of the penis.

WHY HAVE PEARLY PENILE PAPULES TREATED?

This condition may cause psychologic distress to patients. In one study of 95 patients with PPP, 38% of patients were concerned about the appearance of the condition and 17% wanted treatment to improve the appearance. (Sonnex C, Dockerty WG. Pearly penile papules: A common cause of concern. Int J STD AIDS. 1999;10:726–727.)

NATURAL HISTORY

This is a congenital condition and will not resolve with time.

MANAGEMENT

The best treatment is LASER ablation of the coronal rim of the glans penis with a fully ablative CO2 LASER. Treatment removes over 90% of small bumps with these spots unlikely to recur. There are a variety of other treatment modalities however are inferior to CO2 LASER.

CO2 LASER TREATMENT

PRE-TREATMENT

You present for application of topical anaesthetic cream applied to the head of the penis (occluded by cling wrap) for 45min prior to the procedure. Sometimes top up local anaesthetic is injected around the corona of the glans penis for adequate anaesthesia.

LASER TREATMENT

The rim of the penis is treated with LASER removing the small bumps leaving a raw wound encircling the penis.

COMPLICATIONS

Complications are uncommon however may include scarring, altered pigmentation, post-operative pain and secondary infection. I am not aware of persistent altered sensation or functional changes after this treatment.

RECOVERY TIME

Wound care requires application of greasy moisturiser multiple times per day with a course of oral and topical antibiotics

Re-epithelialisation (wound healing) takes 2 weeks for full recovery. The genitals are very vascular and heal quickly.

PROCEDURAL FEES

\$1500 with a refundable rebate of up to \$126. No referral is required.