

Giant Rhinophyma

To the Editor. - A 85-year-old Caucasian male presented with nose growth and dyspnea due to nasal obstruction. The patient admitted that enlargement of the nose has been present for the last ten years and his nose increased in size gradually. The past medical history was unremarkable. Furthermore, the patient stated that he had never drunk alcohol. Dermatological examination revealed erythematous large, lobulated firm tumor on his nose that cause bilateral nostril obstruction (**Figure 1**). Therefore, surgical excision was advised for his rhinophyma to reach good cosmetic and functional outcome. But the patient refused operation because of fear of surgery.

Rhinophyma is the advanced stage of rosacea and it is characterized by soft tissue hypertrophy of the nose with a tumoral appearance. It usually affects men after the age of 50. The etiology remains unknown however androgens, Demodex folliculorum, vitamin deficiency and alcoholism have been proposed as causative factors [1]. It is usually benign but malignant transformation may occur. Basal cell carcinoma has been described on the rhinophymatous nose [2,3].

The diagnosis of rhinophyma is usually made clinically. However, sebaceous carcinoma, keloid scars, lymphoma and eosinophilic facial granuloma should be kept in mind in the differential diagnosis. Skin biopsy may be performed to reach the certain diagnosis. Laser ablation, dermabrasion and surgical excision are the treatment of choice [1]. However, surgery is the most effective treatment for giant lesions [4]. Isotretinoin may be used for sebaceous gland hyperplasia but medical therapy is effective only in the early stages of rhinophyma [4,5]. Rosacea can affect the eyes and ocular rosacea can lead to blepharitis, conjunctivitis and keratitis. Therefore ophthalmological examination should be advised for the patients with ocular symptoms [1].

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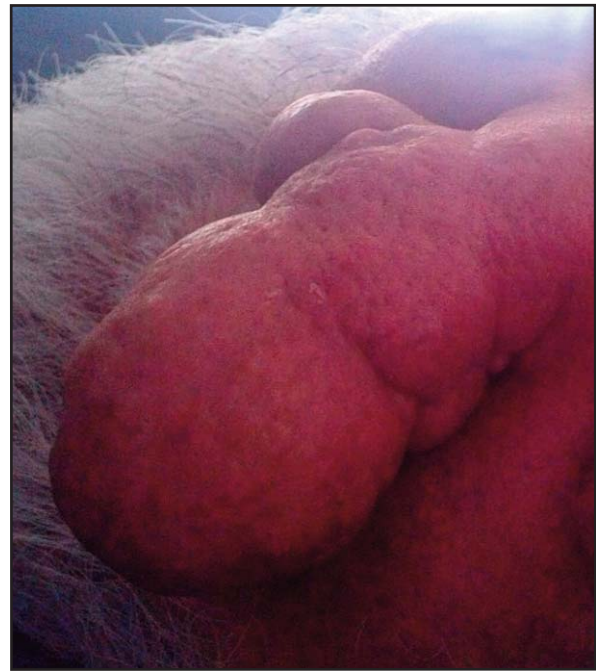


Figure 1. Erythematous, large, lobulated firm tumor on the nose

In conclusion, giant rhinophyma is a very rare condition that may cause breathing or eating difficulties, cosmetic concerns and social isolation. Moreover it can mask or mimic a variety of malignant tumors. So, clinician should be aware of this rare condition. Hereby, we present an elderly patient with a giant rhinophyma who has functional problem rather than cosmetic concerns.

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