



**Service Priorities and Programmes
Electronic Presentations**

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Review of the results of skin punch biopsy in General Outpatient Clinic of Caritas Medical Centre (CMC)

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Introduction

Skin lesions are commonly seen in general outpatient clinic. It is often challenging in managing these patients as the definitive diagnosis may not be clear. The morphology of skin lesions changes over time, especially after the use of topical treatment or scratching. A biopsy is useful in clinical management of these patients.

Objectives

To review the results of skin punch biopsy in CMC GOPC

Methodology

The records of all patients with punch biopsy of skin done from Sept 2009 to Jan 2014 were reviewed.

Result

From Sept 2009 to Jan 2014, eleven punch biopsies of skin were done. Three biopsies were superficial perivascular dermatitis. Two biopsies were lichen simplex chronicus. Two biopsies were spongiotic dermatitis. The other three biopsies were psoriasis, mild to moderate dysplasia of surface epithelium and pseudoepithelial hyperplasia. One biopsy did not show significant pathology. All biopsy procedures were successful and uneventful. Punch biopsy is a technique which could be done in primary care settings to obtain a pathological diagnosis. It is especially useful when lesions are extensive or multiple. Punch biopsy were obtained by 4mm punch biopsy needle in our clinic. Full thickness biopsy could be easily obtained under sterile technique. Doctors are advised to list the differential diagnoses in the request form to facilitate the pathologist for the diagnosis. The pathological diagnoses obtained can guide the management plan. It is useful to rule out malignant change of lesion. One of our patients was a 73year-old man who had a 6cm pigmented patch over abdominal wall for decades. The lesion was enlarged in recent months. The itchiness was transiently improved with topical steroid. Biopsy showed mild to moderated dysplasia of surface epithelium. Patient was urgently referred to dermatology clinic and excision was done. Another patient was a 78year-old man, who had skin rash for 3-4 years. The rash started off as flat erythematous lesions at shins and forearms. Later, some itchy hyperpigmented nodules developed over thighs. The itchiness improved with

synalar cream but the size of lesions remained the same. Biopsy showed pseudoepitheliomatous hyperplasia. Patient was followed up in the dermatology clinic. A definitive diagnosis can enhance patient understanding to the cause of disease. For example, management of lichen simplex chronicus could be more focus on the behavioral change and patient may be more compliant to the advice given.