



Pathology Page

Scabies

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A woman 25 years of age died of respiratory failure. On autopsy, generalized scaling of the skin was found. Histopathology showed

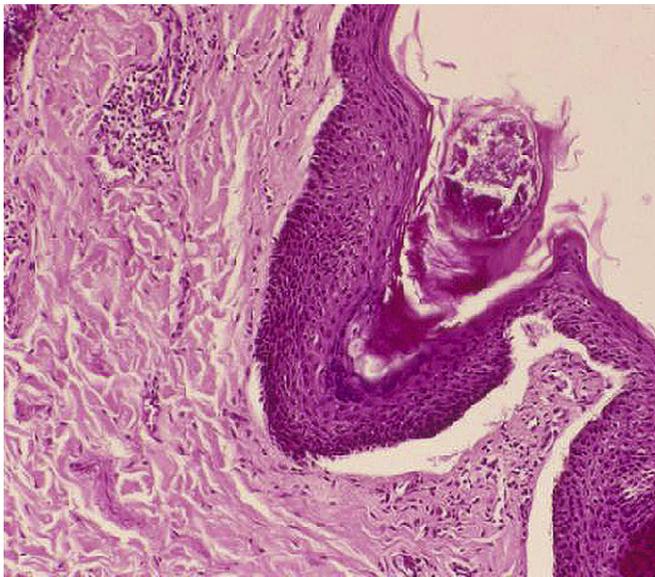


Fig. 1. Histopathology shows scabies embedded in the keratin layer (hematoxylin and eosin stain $\times 400$).

scabies embedded in the keratin layer (Fig. 1). Scabies, an infection of the human itch mite *Sarcoptes scabiei*, remains a significant source of morbidity in residents of nursing homes because of its highly contagious nature. It is characterized by severe pruritus and papules, pustules, burrows, nodules, and occasionally urticarial lesions. Lesions are commonly found on the wrists, finger webs, antecubital region, fossa, axilla, areola, periumbilical region, lower abdomen, genitals, and the buttocks. The diagnosis is based on the history, physical examination, and demonstration of mites, eggs, or scybala (feces) on microscopic examination. Therapy for scabies requires the sequential use of scabicides, usually over a longer period than what is required to clear an ordinary case of scabies. Transmission in hospitals from an index patient with crusted scabies to other patients and healthcare workers is possible and should be avoided.

Further reading

- [1] Golant AK, Levitt JO. Scabies: a review of diagnosis and management based on mite biology. *Pediatr Rev* 2012;33:e1–2.
- [2] Gould D. Prevention, control and treatment of scabies. *Nurs Stand* 2010;25:42–6.

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