

ORF

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A case of Orf affecting the fingers is discussed.

Orf is a viral zoonosis caused by the parapox virus. It causes infection of the lip and mouth in young sheep and goats. The infection in human is caused by direct inoculation of the infected material. This is seen among shepherds, farmers and among veterinarians. The lesions occur at the site of viral inoculations. The lesions are usually seen on the fingers. This may be associated with malaise, lymphangitis and regional lymphadenopathy. The lesion can occur at any part of the skin or mucous membranes

Case Report:

A 37-year-old man attended the clinic seeking treatment for multiple erythematous nodules with yellowish centre on the fingers. One of the lesions was an hemorrhagic bulla with umblicated centre, surrounded by a violaceous ring (Fig I & II). The patient had history of contact with sheep. A clinical diagnosis of Orf was made which was confirmed by biopsy. The patient had treatment with liquid nitrogen application. The lesions subsided with 2 applications of liquid nitrogen in two weeks intervals. Complete resolution occurred in 4 weeks time.

Discussion:

The Orf is a zoonosis. It has been known by various names (Tab.1). The disease is transmitted to



Fig I: Erythematous nodule with yellowish centre on the ring finger



Fig II: Haemorrhagic Bullous lesion on the thumb

humans by direct contact with sheep or goats⁽¹⁾ (Fig III). It has an incubation period of 3 days to 1 week⁽²⁾. In humans the infection appears in the form of nodules on the exposed areas, usually on the hands. The orf nodules are redish blue, slightly tender, the centre of the lesion being depressed and crusted. The Orf has six stages, and heals in about 35 days⁽³⁾. Each stage has about 6 days. Usually complications are rare, but sometimes secondary bacterial infection, lymphangitis, lymphadenitis, fever, chills and erythema-multiforme may occur. In some areas, human orf infection is a common occupational hazard, associated with slaughtering of sheep and goats.

The sheep is playing an important role in maintaining the virus in the environment. The orf has been reported on the scalp following trauma⁽⁴⁾. The unusual sites can be involved by inoculation of the virus from an inanimate object. The involvement in

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ORF

ALSO KNOWN AS

- ECTHYMA CONTAGIOSUM
- SORE MOUTH DISEASE
- SCABBY MOUTH DISEASE
- CONTAGEOUS PUSTULAR DERMATITIS
- BOVINE PUSTULAR DERMATITIS

Table 1

the unusual sites may lead to uncertainty of the diagnosis⁽⁴⁾. Orf has been reported in pregnancy and the baby had no evidence of intrauterine infection⁽⁵⁾. Sometimes erythema multiforme may occur following the primary orf infection⁽⁶⁾.

Diagnosis is made from history of contact with infected sheep and the clinical appearance of the lesions. The Confirmation can be made by biopsy or by electron microscopy. The growth of the virus is slow in tissue culture and inconsistent

Differential diagnosis includes milker's nodule, pyogenic granuloma and malignant tumours. There

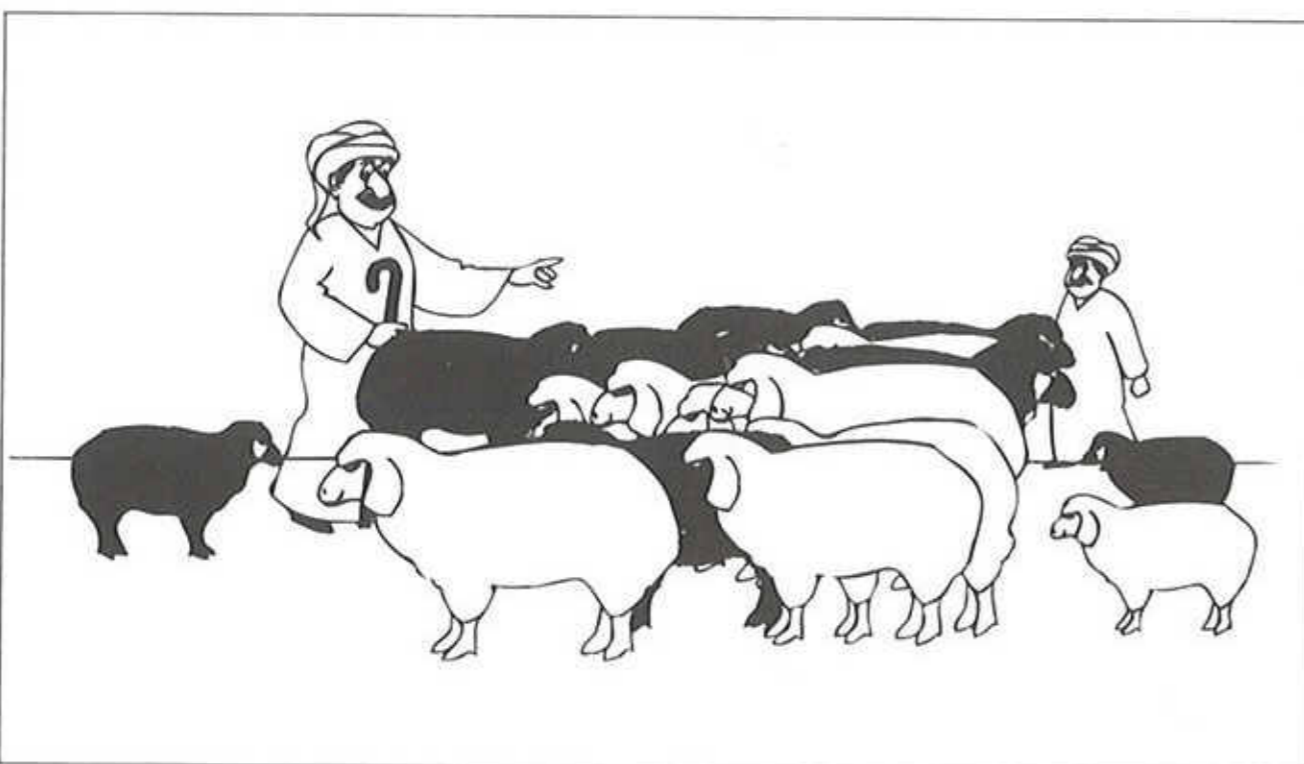


Fig III: Orf is seen among shepherds

is no specific treatment. Secondary bacterial infection should be treated with antibiotics. The prognosis is very good. The 40% Idoxuridine has been claimed to reduce the duration of the lesions⁽⁷⁾.

The cryosurgery is an excellent method of treatment⁽¹⁾. Surgical excision of the lesions is contraindicated⁽⁸⁾.

The awareness of this condition among physicians is important to avoid unnecessary treatments and surgical procedures.

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