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INTERNAL MEDICINE BOARD REVIEW MANUAL

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Case Studies in Skin Cancer; Case Studies in Acne

Series Editor: Richard J. Simons, MD, FACP

Professor of Medicine

Assistant Dean for Medical Education

Director, Internal Medicine Residency Training Program

Department of Medicine

Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine

Hershey, PA

Table of Contents

Preface ii

Chapter 1—Case Studies in Skin Cancer 1

Contributing Author: Debra Q. Miller, MD

*Associate Director, Internal Medicine Residency Training Program,
Department of Medicine, Pennsylvania State University College of
Medicine, Hershey, PA*

Chapter 2—Case Studies in Acne 10

Contributing Author: Diane Thiboutot, MD

*Associate Professor, Section of Dermatology, Department of Medicine,
Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, Hershey, PA*

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Chapter 1—Case Studies in Skin Cancer

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Debra Q. Miller, MD

Associate Director

Internal Medicine Residency Training Program

Department of Medicine

Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine

Hershey, PA

I. INTRODUCTION

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States; its incidence has dramatically increased during the past 4 decades, particularly for melanomas.¹ Skin cancers can be classified into melanoma and non-melanoma types, with the nonmelanoma type consisting of basal cell and squamous cell malignancies. Although most skin cancers involve a small area of the body and are minimally or only locally invasive, skin cancer also can be a systemic, metastatic disease with substantial morbidity and mortality.²

Nonmelanoma skin cancer has an annual incidence in the United States of more than 600,000 cases.³ Melanoma affects approximately 32,000 individuals in the United States each year, with a corresponding mortality rate of 6500.² Although mortality from nonmelanoma skin cancers is less common, as many as 1500 deaths each year are attributable to invasive squamous cell carcinoma (SCC). Skin cancer is more common in men than in women, and basal cell carcinomas (BCCs) are about 4 times more common than squamous cell cancers. A patient who has nonmelanoma skin cancer is at increased risk of developing another cutaneous cancer of the same histologic type.³

This review article describes the clinical features,

diagnosis, treatment, and management of skin cancers. Two case patients are presented to show essential concepts necessary for diagnosis and management of these cancers.

II. RISK FACTORS

CASE PATIENT I PRESENTATION

Patient 1 is a 64-year-old Caucasian man with a history of severe acne as a teenager who presents for a routine follow-up visit. He was a lifeguard in his early 20s and sunburned easily on many occasions. On physical examination, you note a 5-mm, flesh-colored papule with telangiectasias on his left cheek (**Figure 1**). He has blue eyes, blond hair, a fair complexion, and a moderate amount of freckling.

- **Each of the following characteristics of patient 1 is a risk factor for skin cancer EXCEPT:**

- A) Male gender
- B) Sunburns easily
- C) Freckling
- D) History of acne
- E) Blue eyes