

Part one

1. (b). A painless lump in the margin of the eyelid is a chalazion, or meibomian cyst. In hordeolum there is an abscess, which is acutely painful. Dermatofibromas are fibrous lumps in the skin elsewhere, and the chances of the lump being malignant or a cholesterol cyst are tiny at her age.

Part two

2. (b), (c), (d), and (e) are all pointers to the diagnosis. Grittiness and sticky eyes suggest blepharitis and infection, that may also need treating. Pressure from the lump on the eyeball may distort her vision; this may mean that she needs urgent decompression of the lump.

Part three

3. (a), (b), and (e). Acne rosacea and seborrhoeic dermatitis predispose to chalazion, and blepharitis may be present with it. There is no link with conjunctivitis or tuberculosis, although when a large chalazion impacts on the eyeball it can feel like conjunctivitis.

Part four

4. (f) Most chalazions respond well to twice daily heat and massage. Soak a flannel in hand hot water and apply it to the closed eyelids for 10 minutes twice daily. This softens the secretions so that gentle fingertip massage for another 10 minutes will empty the cyst. It may need many weeks of treatment to remove it completely, but it does work, and Leila managed her own chalazion successfully. If it is impinging on the eye, disturbing vision, then it can be surgically opened and curetted, or given an intralesional triamcinolone injection. This is very much a second-line approach. If blepharitis occurs, especially in patients with acne rosacea, a 3-month course of tetracycline is indicated.

Part five

5. (a) Once the reasoning behind the treatment was explained to Leila she followed the advice to the letter.

Africa Health goes digital! Open Access means a free resource for this and recent issues. Visit www.africa-health.com