

Helping Leila lose her lumps (answers on page 46)

Part one

Leila is 23 and has had very little need to visit the doctor since she was a small child. She says she is well, apart from a small lump that has appeared in her left upper eyelid. It has been there for about a month, and has slowly grown bigger, so that it has started to become uncomfortable, though in itself it is not painful. It is not tender to the touch.

Q1 What are your initial differential diagnoses?

- (a) Hordeolum.
- (b) Chalazion.
- (c) Dermatofibroma.
- (d) Sebaceous cell carcinoma.
- (e) Cholesterol cyst.

Part two

You run your finger gently along the lid margin, and find another much smaller lump 2 mm from the first. The first lump feels harder than the smaller one, which is fluctuant.

Q2 What further questions would you ask Leila?

- (a) Has she noticed any lumps elsewhere?
- (b) Does the lump vary in size?
- (c) Has it disturbed her vision?
- (d) Has her eye felt gritty at any time?
- (e) Does she wake with sticky eyes?

Leila's answers allow you to make a positive diagnosis.

Part three

Q3 Which other conditions are commonly linked with Leila's problem?

- (a) Acne.
- (b) Seborrhoeic dermatitis.
- (c) Allergic conjunctivitis.
- (d) Infective conjunctivitis.
- (e) Blepharitis.
- (f) Tuberculosis.

You now have to decide on a course of treatment.

Part four

Q4 Which of the following is the most likely to help Leila lose her lumps?

- (a) Surgical removal.
- (b) Needle aspiration.
- (c) Injection with steroid.
- (d) Local combined antibiotic/steroid ointment.
- (e) Oral antibiotics.
- (f) Twice a day heat and massage.

Part five

Q5 Leila was put on long-term treatment for her eyelid lumps, and it was successful.

How would you explain to her why she needed the treatment?

- (a) The lump contains fatty material which the heat and massage will disperse over time, maybe some weeks.
- (b) She needs the antibiotics to protect her eyes from the spreading infection.
- (c) Surgery is essential to remove the lump completely, so that it will not return or spread.
- (d) Steroids are needed to prevent allergy recurrence.
- (e) She needs eye tests to rule out visual disturbance from pressure on the eye.

At follow up 3 months later, Leila's eyelids were free of lumps, and she was discharged from the clinic.