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TRICHOPHYTOSIS BARBAE

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Synonyms: *Tinea sycosis*, seu *barbae*, seu *trichophytina barbae*; *Sycosis parasitica*, seu *parasitaria*, seu *hyphomycotica*; *Herpes tonsurans barbae*; Barber's itch; Ringworm of the beard.

Ringworm is a common disease, but ringworm of the beard is comparatively uncommon. The disease generally starts superficially, as it does on any other part of the body surface, in the form of one or more round, hyperemic, slightly scaling, spreading patches. Properly treated, the condition will not progress beyond this stage, but usually the fungus penetrates rapidly into the hairs and hair follicles and produces considerable sluggish inflammatory swelling, so that the skin becomes lumpy. The pea to nut-sized nodes are at first firm and their surface may be slightly scaly or smooth and shining; later they become boggy, of a congested red or purplish color, dotted with follicular pustules, from which a glairy, purulent excretion can be expressed, or sometimes exudes in sufficient quantity to form crusts. Some of the diseased hairs break off, leaving ragged stumps, others fall out or the slightest traction serves to remove them painlessly as smoothly as a pin can be drawn from a pin cushion. The area of involvement varies. Rarely there is only a single node; still more rarely the whole bearded region is affected. Usually the disease is limited to the chin or to the chin and lower jaw; the upper lip is seldom included, and is probably never alone involved. The

subjective symptoms are not prominent, at first there may be slight itching, later some pain and tenderness. In every case of ringworm it is well to ascertain whether or not the source of infection may be some horse, cat, dog or other domestic animal affected with the disease. **DIAGNOSIS:** The condition can scarcely be confounded with other maladies. *Sycosis* frequently attacks the upper lip, it does not produce the infiltrated and nodular condition of the skin, and only when suppuration is quite advanced do the hairs slip out easily, and they are never frayed or broken. *Furuncles* are much more inflammatory, acute and painful. When any doubt exists some of the diseased hairs should be soaked in liquor potassii hydroxidi and examined under the microscope; the presence or absence of spores will settle the diagnosis. **TREATMENT:** The hairs in the affected region should be thoroughly epilated, and the rest of the beard kept closely trimmed or shaved. An ointment consisting of one drachm of iodine crystals well mixed with one ounce of goose grease should be rubbed vigorously into the diseased area once a day. If at any time the reaction is too intense the inunctions may be discontinued for a couple of days. After the skin is again smooth and new hairs are appearing the treatment may be continued with a milder remedy, such as white precipitate ointment or a ten per cent. aqueous solution of sodium hyposulphite, frequently sponged on the face and allowed to dry.