

Ear discomfort

This 48 year old Vietnamese man presented to his GP complaining of discomfort and decreased acuity in his right ear. The symptoms had come suddenly, two days after he returned to Australia from a visit to his parents in a remote part of rural Vietnam. While there, he sought traditional therapies for his osteoarthritis.

The appearance of the pinna is as shown. The external auditory meatus was completely obstructed by cerumen.



Steve Trumble and Craig Blandy

Question 1

What has caused the appearance of this man's ear?

Question 2

What infective condition does it resemble?

Question 3

What is the most likely cause of the deafness?

Answer to last month's brain teaser



Answer 1

Biopsy is essential for all suspected lesions.

Answer 2

Biopsy showed a squamous cell carcinoma.

Answer 3

Excision by a plastic surgeon was carried out. Since there is a possibility that squamous cell carcinoma may metastasise patients need to be followed closely with skin examinations as well as palpitation of regional draining lymph nodes. Follow up examinations are conducted every 3–6 months for the first two years, then annually for five years.

Send your answers to arrive by 5 July. A voucher for medical books or medical equipment to the value of \$100 will be awarded for the first correct entry drawn. The winner will be notified by mail and the answer published in the July 2003 issue.

Address entries to:
June Brain Teaser
Australian Family Physician
1 Palmerston Crescent
South Melbourne
Victoria 3205

The winner of the April Brain teaser is Dr Sally Parsons, Stirling, SA