

## Over the Counter Topical Mole Remover: Danger in a Bottle

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### Abstract

We report the case of a 7 year old male, who presented to clinic after being treated with an over-the-counter mole and skin tag remover to cosmetically remove and eliminate two nevi from the child's face. This over the counter treatment does not display or reflect the potential side effects such as the ones illustrated in this case report. Many non FDA approved over the counter treatments exist for the treatment of skin lesions, with many lacking documentation about the potential side effects. In this case report we highlight why proper diagnosis and treatment by a dermatologist is paramount to minimize side effects. We wish to illustrate and discuss the dangers of over-the-counter treatments, the lack of regulation, and the false advertising of such treatments.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The utilization of over the counter creams and other topical agents to treat various skin lesions has surged in recent years [1]. This surge is mainly caused by the ability of patients to shop online and have access to medical literature [1].

While many of these topical treatments are safe and natural solutions, they often lack the proper regulation, and fail to disclose the potential risks associated with the use of said product [2]. This is tremendously important when these unverified treatments can be used on the face, in vulnerable populations such as children [2]. This case report presents the consequences of such a scenario: a 7 year old developed keloid scars after topical application to treat lesions present on his face.

The treatment was purchased online during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in painful ulceration and persistent erythema and eventually developing into keloid scars. While being marketed as a harmless, herbal solution, this product inflicted considerable damage, emphasizing the critical need for proper medical oversight in management of skin related growths. The emphasis this case report aims to highlight is the need for regulation of over the counter treatments such as these, this case underscores

the importance of accurate diagnosis and treatment by a dermatologist.

### 2. CASE

A 7-year-old male presented to clinic with the complaint of raised red lesions on his face after using the topical treatment "MOLE AND SKIN TAG REMOVER" (Fig 1) which was purchased on Amazon. The mother stated that the child had "warts" on his face and wished to remove them, however because of the COVID-19 pandemic quarantine she did not feel comfortable going to a medical office. After applying the cream as the box instructed, the area began to change color and ulcerate (Fig 2). After a 4-month period the lesion began to worsen and become raised. Upon examination the child presented with two bright erythematous firm papules on his right upper cutaneous lip and right upper alar crease where the mother stated she placed the cream (Fig 3). After discussing the various treatment options the patient was treated with intralesional triamcinolone 10 mg/ml.

### 3. DISCUSSION

Over the counter treatments for various medical conditions have increased over the years with the use of the Internet [1]. Many internet sources provide unverified information with untested

safety efficacy on such at home or over the counter treatments [3]. Many of these at-home mole and skin tag removers exist on the market, however, since they are touted as all natural or herbal supplements, they do not require FDA regulation [3]. There are numerous accounts of patients treating lesions with over the counter at home treatments with little to no success, leaving permanent damage, development of infections, or even worse death [3]. Without proper knowledge of skin lesions, one can treat potentially harmful lesions without proper techniques [4]. As of recently there are cases of patients attempting to remove various skin lesions which develop keloids or infections after use, failing to remove cancerous lesions without removing the entire tumor, and a patient with melanoma who attempted to remove the lesion with such a cream who died from metastatic disease[4]. The cream “MOLE AND SKIN TAG REMOVER” which can be purchased on multiple internet platforms states that it is “Natural and safe”, and that someone can remove moles and skin tags with the “effective herbal formula”. The manufacturers list of ingredients is: Deionized water, Centella Asiatic Extract, Hyaluronic acid, Aloe vera extract, Glycosaminoglycans, Pentanediol, Arbutin, Vitamin C, Linseed oil, and Phenoxyethanol. The

sclerosing nature of such a product can be potentially linked to the glycosaminoglycans present in the cream, however which one is present is not directly stated [5]. The patient is instructed to clean the area with an antibacterial soap and then apply the cream with a toothpick. It states after the application is done the patient will experience a little pain and should wipe the cream away after 2 minutes. The packaging however never states to seek medical advice for the lesion being treated. With the vast increase in the number of cases of such creams causing deleterious effects to patients, this report provides further evidence and illustrates how such unregulated creams for the treatment of undiagnosed lesions can pose potential dangers such as the unknown/ potential side effects that may occur, the incomplete removal of the lesion, or scarring that can occur [4]. This report is among the first to report on the cream “MOLE AND SKIN TAG REMOVER”, with many cases illustrating the harmful nature on the cream “Wart and Mole Vanish” we wish to further illustrate the influence that the internet has on patient care, and how there is a need for regulation of such cream. Furthermore, we wish to report on this cream, and to warn practitioners and patients about the harmful effects it may have.



**Figure 1.** Mole and Skin tag Remover, found on Amazon. A topical mole remover mother used to treat lesions on child's face.



**Figure 2.** Bright erythematous firm papules consistent with keloids. Such lesions formed a few days post treatment with mole and skin tag remover.



**Figure3.** Lesions post treatment of intralesional Kenalog.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This case highlights the significant risks associated with unregulated, over-the-counter topical treatments for skin lesions, particularly when used in vulnerable populations such as children. Despite being marketed as “natural” and “safe,” products like “MOLE AND SKIN TAG REMOVER” can cause serious complications, including ulceration, infection, and permanent scarring, while potentially delaying the diagnosis of malignant lesions. The ease of online access, misleading marketing, and lack of FDA oversight create an environment where patients may unknowingly place themselves at risk. This case underscores the critical importance of proper diagnosis, evidence-based treatment, and medical supervision in the management of skin lesions, and calls for greater regulation, consumer education, and clinician awareness regarding the dangers of these unverified products.

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