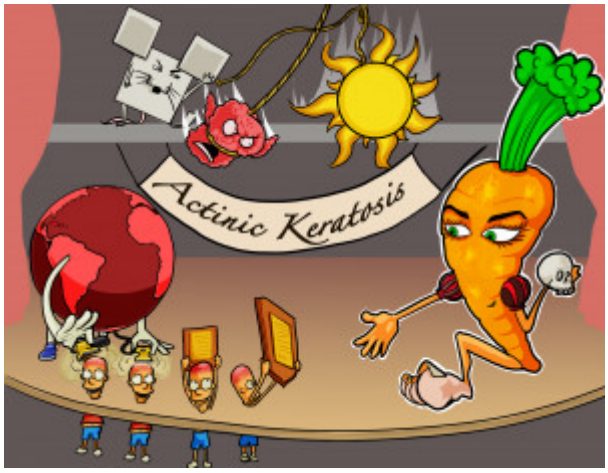
Actinic Keratosis

Actinic keratosis is a premalignant skin condition, which is also called solar or senile keratosis. The lesions from this skin disorder are caused by sun exposure and present as small, rough, erythemetous patches of skin. These lesions are precursors to squamous cell carcinoma.



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Sun Exposure
Sun
The lesions from actinic keratosis develop progressively from sun exposure and UV damage. Patients who are fair-skinned and frequently exposed to the sun are at higher risk for these lesions. Thus, they are encouraged to avoid the sun, use sunscreen and wear protective clothing.

Papules or Plaques
Papule-people and Plaques
These skin abnormalities occur in any sun-exposed area, and range between 2-6 mm in size. These can manifest as either papules (raised lesion less than 5 mm in size) or plaques (flat, raised lesion > 5 mm).

Small, Rough
Small hand-sanders
In the skin, these lesions cause thickening of the epidermis and a loss of the granular layer. This translates into small, rough lesions, which may show scaling.

Erythematous
Earth-red
Most often, the skin affected by actinic keratosis is erythematous (red), but can sometimes appear brownish.

Precursor to Squamous Cell Carcinoma
Square-mouse with Tumor-guy
These skin lesions are premalignant, and the risk of development into squamous cell carcinoma is directly proportional to the level of cell dysplasia. Biopsy can be done to make sure a very dysplastic lesion is not in fact a cancer.

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