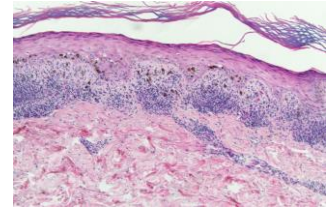


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Histopathology of LP

Lichen planus (LP) often appears as small (1- 2 mm) red to purplish, flat topped bumps in groups on the wrists and ankles, but the elevations may be anywhere on the body. The lesions of LP may be circular, while they may also be grouped to give a ring-like appearance. They often are covered by slight white scale, known as Wickham's striae. Not infrequently, LP may cause intense itching.



Reddish purple lesions on the wrist



LP lesions on the back that are clumped and darker

Lp can also appear in the mouth as white lacey streaks, but this is not always the case. It may affect the nails, creating whitish lines, along with brittleness, malformation, and depressed areas. In fact, LP may be found just on the fingernails and toenails without being seen in the mouth or on the skin.

Similar Conditions

When LP appears in a line rather than a clump, it may look just like a nevus (mole) or even a verruca (wart). Then, a biopsy would be indicated to confirm the diagnosis. Other laboratory studies are usually not helpful. Another name for LP is lichen ruber planus.

Cause

What causes LP is unclear. There is a similar drug eruption from atabrine, a pill that was used to treat malaria during WWII. Periodically, LP has been thought to be the result of a viral infection, but this also has not been proven.

Lacey-white streaks in the mouth



Fragile, poorly formed nail in LP

