**Papilloma**  
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**Overview**  
A papilloma can be described as a small benign tumor with a well-defined border that is raised or flat. They can appear in various shapes and sizes. Papillomas do not grow aggressively nor do they spread. They are usually found on epithelium layer of the skin. The term “papilloma” is used to describe the virus because many HPVs cause papillomas. They are also commonly known as warts.

**Etiology**  
Most papillomas are known to be caused by HPV, which is the human papillomavirus. People can catch the most common types through physical contact with others who have visible warts or by touching objects used by someone who has warts on any part of their body. You can get genital HPV, which is highly contagious through sexual intercourse, vaginal as well as anal. It can also be passed through oral sex. HPV is known to be a skin-to-skin infection.

**Clinical Presentation**  
When symptoms are visible, they often appear in the form of warts that can grow on any part of your body. Genital warts can be symptomatic or asymptomatic. The reason why genital warts spread so quickly is that most people may not develop symptoms and are unaware without knowing they have the disease. Papillomas appear as white or normal colored in a cauliflower like shape. They are usually less than 1 centimeter. The most common site where they arise from is the soft palate/uvula area followed by the tongue and lips.

**Demographic**  
Anyone is at risk for HPV. There has been known cases of 3 year olds, 5 year olds, and 10 year olds who have never been sexually active and have been found to be positive for HPV(Parks, 2009). Both men and women are able to contact the virus. Most people think of sexually transmitted viruses when they hear HPV. Newborns can be infected during birth in their airway by passing through the birth canal of an infected mother. Wart like tumors can form in the back of the throat and usually on the larynx and around the vocal cords. Newborns can also contract HPV by the mother’s breast milk.

**Biopsy / Histology / Radiographs**  
You usually do not take a biopsy for papillomas. Histologically, a papilloma may appear long and thin with fingerlike projections. You may also see stratified squamous epithelium that may have thin central connective tissue. They also have a cauliflower appearance. You usually will not see a papilloma on a radiograph since they are usually present on soft tissue.

**Differential Diagnosis**  
Papillomas can usually be compared to condyloma acuminatum in appearance. This disease is related to the papillomavirus and is a sexually transmitted disease. Papillomas can easily be mistaken for this disease because they both appear as whitish warts and are highly contagious. They also may appear in the same location. The condyloma can appear slightly bigger in size than a papilloma and may also look less keratinized.

**Treatment**  
Physicians are usually able to diagnose common warts by physical examination. Most warts do not require treatment but sometimes they are painful and people choose to treat them. These warts can be treated through cryotherapy, which destroys the warts by freezing them. The warts can also be treated by surgical removal or laser surgery.

**Prognosis**  
Treatment for papillomas can be helpful in that once the lesion is removed, the patient is cured of pain and reoccurrence is unlikely. If the lesion is left, there is more of a likelihood of spreading the disease to another person.

**Professional Relevance**  
The intra and extraoral examination that the dental hygienist performs during dental hygiene care is one of the most important services provided for patients. We are able to identify abnormalities that may be present and that can put the patient at risk. Since condyloma acuminatum can be transmitted by sexual contact, you would not expect to see this in a pediatric patient. If this does occur, then this can possibly mean that child abuse is occurring.

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