Cranial wound after removal of basal epithelioma

A 70 year old woman showed basal cell epithelioma on top of her head. Epithelioma can be described as a rapid local growth of epithelium and can be benign or malignant. They can be removed with topical immunotherapy, photodynamic therapy, radiotherapy, but in most cases surgical removal is safe when enough margins are available around the defect (Heppner, 1935; Telfer, 2008).

In this case surgery was performed to remove the malignant epithelioma and perform a partial convergence of the wound. The removal was done and all the abundant tissue growth was removed leaving an open wound measuring ± 8cm x 4.6cm and 0.5cm deep. For about a week post-op the wound was treated with povidone iodine 10% solution and fusidic acid paraffin gauze.

Unfortunately necrotic tissue developed, combined with high exudates and malodour. This lead to a change in wound management, in this case to medical grade honey products as they have proven in the past in our hospital to be useful. The expectation now was that it would remove the malodour and start granulation in the wound bed. The patient did not receive any other medications that might be of influence on wound healing.

Product: L-Mesitran Soft, L-Mesitran Net
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Method & Observations
At the start of the honey treatment (pic. 1) the wound was very wet, malodorous and showed necrosis. The wound was first cleaned with saline. Then it was covered with the honey mesh (L-Mesitran Net) on top of which the medical grade honey gel was applied (L-Mesitran Soft). On top of this a calcium alginate dressing (Suprasorb A, L&R) was placed and fixed by a sterile adhesive dressing. Dressing changes were done every other day.

Results
After only eight days the malodour was gone. The necrotic tissue was softened and removed (pic. 2). Eight days later the lesion showed marked granulation and its size was reduced by 50% (pic. 3). Throughout the course of treatment (pic. 4-8) the wound closed without any adverse effects and it completely healed in two months. The dressings were easy to apply without damaging newly formed delicate tissue. The dressing changes were done by the physician at the patient’s home. At the 6 months follow up, the epithelioma had not returned.

Discussion
In this case the open wound, after basal cell epithelioma removal, deteriorated after treatment with povidone iodine and fusidic acid in 8 days post-op. Frequently used wound- and skin antisepsics show severe cytotoxic effects towards cutaneous cells (Hirsch, 2009) and should therefore not be used in wound healing. This is evidenced by the progress in wound healing in this case when the medical grade honey was applied. The progress was remarkable and within 8 days the malodour was gone and granulation observed, leading to full wound healing in two months. In wound healing after basal cell epithelioma removal medical grade honey can be the first line of treatment.

Declaration of interest
This case was done independently. The company Theraskin Care Products provided the pictures.

References