PIEZOGENIC PAPULES

Papules are small, raised lesions on the skin. The word piezogenic comes from the Greek meaning ‘pressure causing’. Piezogenic papules are small skin-colored soft bumps on the heels, resulting from the bulging of fat through the layers of the skin. They are benign lesions and are often asymptomatic and noticed incidentally. Piezogenic papules are frequently observed in overweight women and are associated with flat feet, excessive weight-bearing exercise, and underlying connective tissue disorders. Painful papules may correlate with Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS), Prader-Willi syndrome, obesity, and weight-bearing activity. Piezogenic papules are diagnosed clinically, with no laboratory testing or imaging necessary. Clinical diagnosis follows the following criteria: are compressible, resolve when feet are elevated, occur mainly over the posterolateral border of the heels, and are often bilateral.

Treatment is not necessary for asymptomatic patients. For painful lesions, conservative management may be initiated and includes weight loss, reduction of weight-bearing exercise, compression stockings, foam foot pads, or heal cups. Additionally, restriction of standing, walking, and running may be helpful in cases of patients with painful papules. For additional management, podiatry consultation may be necessary. Intralesional corticosteroid injections have shown some efficacy in patients with underlying EDS. Surgical excision may be necessary if the painful lesions persist despite conservative management.