

DEFINITION

1. A **cyst** is a swelling consisting of a collection of fluid in a sac which is lined by epithelium or endothelium.

CLASSIFICATION AND AETIOLOGY

2. Cysts may be classified as follows:-

2.1 Congenital

- 2.1.1 **Sequestration dermoids.** These are due to dermal cells being buried along the lines of closure of embryonic clefts and sinuses by skin fusion. The usual sites are the mid line of the body about the outer canthus and anterior triangle of the neck.
- 2.1.2 **Tubulo-dermoid.** These occur in the track of an ectodermal tube used in development - eg. a thyroglossal cyst from the thyroglossal duct.
- 2.1.3 **Cysts of embryonic remnants.** These arise from embryonic tubules and ducts which normally disappear or are only present as remnants.

3. Such cysts are the result of developmental abnormality and owe nothing to external factors.

3.1 Acquired

- 3.1.1 **Retention cysts**, which are due to the accumulated secretion of a gland following obstruction of a duct. A **sebaceous cyst** starts with obstruction of the sebaceous gland but this is followed by the down growth and accumulation of desquamated epidermal cells thus turning it into an epidermoid cyst. The cause is that of the obstruction.
- 3.1.2 **Distention cysts**, which occur in the thyroid from dilatation of the acini or in the ovary from a follicle. They result from over-production of fluid by the gland.
- 3.1.3 **Exudation cysts** which occur when fluid exudes into an anatomical space already lined by endothelium - eg. hydrocele, bursa - or when a collection of exudate becomes encysted. These are false cysts.
- 3.1.4 **Cystic tumours**, examples being cystic teratomas and cystadenomas. The cause of the cyst is the cause of the underlying tumour.

3.1.5 **Implanation dermoids**, which arise from squamous epithelium which has been driven beneath the skin by a penetrating wound.

3.1.6 **Trauma**. If trauma results in a haematoma, then this may develop into a cyst.

3.1.7 **Degeneration cysts** develop from fluid accumulating in the centre of a tumour due to degeneration of the tumour centre. The cyst is an integral part of the tumour and not a separate entity.

3.2 **Parasitic**. These are encysted forms in the life-cycle of various worms such as hydatid, trichiniasis and cysticercosis.

CONCLUSION

4. There are various types of cysts, these being described above. The cause depends upon the type.

REFERENCES

Mann C V and Russell R C G (Eds). Bailey and Love's Short Practice of Surgery. 21st Ed. 1992. London. Chapman & Hall Medical. p148-151.

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