

ULCERATION AND PERFORATION OF THE NASAL SEPTUM MEDICAL APPENDIX

DEFINITION

1. When the epithelium of the nasal septum is damaged an ulcer may be produced. If this becomes sufficiently deep it may result in a perforation of the nasal septum.

CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS

2. Often the condition is asymptomatic. The main symptom is crusting which may be severe enough to cause obstruction of the nasal airway. Separation of the crusting may lead to bleeding. There is often a complaint of dryness of the nose and a whistling sound may be present as the respiratory air passes a perforation.

AETIOLOGY

3. **Trauma** following surgery or repeated cautery. The condition may also be produced digitally by nose picking.
4. **Tumours.**
5. **Chronic infection** due especially to syphilis or tuberculosis.
6. **Toxins.** A large number of industrial chemicals may cause the condition, especially those containing chromium. It may be caused by the use of some forms of snuff.
7. **Idiopathic.**

CONCLUSION

8. The nasal septum may be ulcerated or perforated by a number of causes which are summarised above.

REFERENCE

Mackay I S and Bull T R (Eds). Scott-Brown's Otolaryngology. 5th Ed. 1987. London. Butterworths. p171-172.

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