

Granuloma Annulare (GA)

Definition

Granuloma annulare is a long-term (chronic) skin disease consisting of a rash with reddish bumps arranged in circles or rings. It is usually asymptomatic and not serious.

Causes

Granuloma annulare most often affects children and young adults, but any age can be affected. It is slightly more common in girls. The condition is usually seen in otherwise healthy people and is usually a reason to worry about a person's general health. Sometimes the disease is associated with diabetes or thyroid disease, but this is thought to be mainly in more severe cases of granuloma annulare.

Symptoms

Granuloma annulare usually causes no other symptoms, but the rash may be slightly itchy.

Patients usually notice a ring of small, firm bumps over the backs of the forearms, hands, or feet. Most people get a few of these rings. Rarely, granuloma annulare may appear as a firm nodule under the skin.

Tests

A skin biopsy may be necessary to confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment

Because granuloma annulare is usually asymptomatic, treatment may not be necessary except for cosmetic reasons. Injections of steroids directly into the rings may be effective.

Prognosis

Most lesions of granuloma annulare disappear with no treatment within two years. Sometimes, however, the rings can remain for many years. The appearance of new rings years later is not uncommon.

