

A Selection of Cutaneous and Related Tumors of Cats

(A Photographic Essay)

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CHRONIC EXPOSURE of skin to ultraviolet radiation by the sun induces pathologic changes. The relationship between exposure to ultraviolet light and development of cutaneous cancers has been documented.^{1,2}

In man, all actinic keratoses, most squamous cell carcinomas, and two-thirds of all basal cell carcinomas occur on sun-damaged skin.² Extensive exposure to sunlight can be expected to have a similar effect on light-skinned animals or on unprotected or unpigmented skin, such as on the nose.

In the temperate climate of the southern United States an animal is likely to be exposed to ultraviolet light more often than in some other areas of the country,³ and a practitioner could expect to see the results in the form of cutaneous lesions. In the early stages these lesions can be halted or reversed. Some are amenable to surgery.

Another factor in the development of cutaneous lesions on the head, neck, or ears might be the effects of infestation by ear mites. The chronic trauma resulting from scratching and shaking the head may be implicated in the development and growth of tumors.

The lesion shown in Figure 1 is best described as precancerous. It had the potential to develop into a squamous cell carcinoma if exposed to more sunlight. This lesion was reversed by confinement of the cat indoors during daylight hours and application of hydrocortisone cream to the affected area. Water-soluble cream appears to be the most effective formulation for treatment of lesions on the nose. Tattooing is also effective.

Due to abject neglect, the squamous cell carcinoma of the male cat pictured in Figure 2 became far advanced. This animal had lived out of doors in the Florida Keys for 12 years. The nasal turbinates were severely affected and euthanasia was requested. Earlier, treatment by cryosurgery or radiation

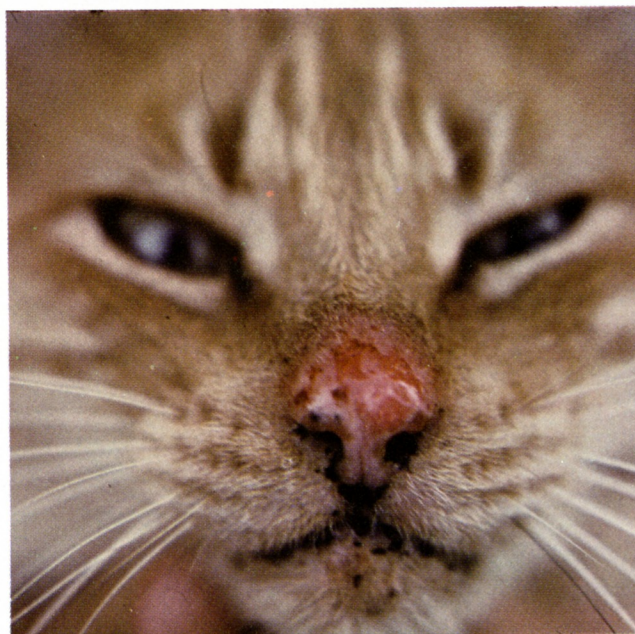


Figure 1—An 8-year-old neutered male cat with a nasal precancerous lesion (actinic keratosis).

