

# Basal cell epithelioma at a glance

## Epidemiology

### Prevalence

100 000 cases in the UK, 2001; 90% of non-melanoma skin cancers

### Age

More common in the elderly

### Race

Races with fair complexion

### Other

Associated with chronic exposure to UVB and, more rarely, exposure to non-ionizing radiation and inorganic arsenic

## Clinical features

Lesions commonly at sides of the nose and around the orbit  
Slow-growing, pearly, flesh-coloured translucent smooth papules or nodules with rolled edges or plaques  
Surface telangiectasia  
Frequent central necrosis with crusting or ulceration  
More rarely, cystic or pigmented lesions

## Management

Cryosurgery  
Curettage/cautery  
Excisional surgery ( $\pm$  grafting)  
Mohs' micrographic surgery ( $\pm$  grafting)  
Chemosurgery (intralesional 5-fluorouracil)  
Radiotherapy



Fig. A Basal cell carcinoma below the right eye. Nodule.



Fig. B Classical crateriform basal cell carcinoma. Ulcerating nodule.



Fig. C Superficial basal cell carcinoma on back of shin. Red scaly patch.



Fig. D Morphoeic basal cell carcinoma on the face. Irregular plaque.



Fig. E Pigmented basal cell carcinoma. Courtesy of Dr R.C.D. Staughton.