

GLOMUS TUMOUR OF THE NAIL

What are the aims of this leaflet?

This leaflet has been written to help you understand more about glomus tumour. It tells you what it is, what causes it and what can be done about it.

What is glomus tumour of the nail?

It is a benign tumour that is the result of the proliferation of glomus bodies that are found in abundance in the nails, fingertips, hands and legs. The glomus tumour that is found in the nail is commoner in females between the ages of 30-50. It presents with the three following features: pain, pinpoint tenderness and sensitivity to cold.

What causes the glomus tumour?

Glomus bodies are vascular structures that are found within a sac (capsule) making the glomus tumour. The capsule is surrounded by tiny nerve fibres, making glomus tumour exceptionally painful, especially to temperature changes (to cold).

What does glomus tumour of the nail look like?

It presents as a red or blue spot of a few millimetres in diameter or as a red line along the nail that terminates in its free end creating a split or a groove.

How is glomus tumour of the nail diagnosed?

1. From the history – classic presentation of pain, pinpoint tenderness and sensitivity to cold.
2. Probing on the area of the tumour stimulates severe tenderness

3. Visualisation of the tumour with the use of direct light underneath it
4. Placing an ice cube on the nail or immersing the digit in cold water worsens the pain
5. MRI is the test of choice

How can the glomus tumour of the nail be treated?

Surgical removal is the treatment of choice for painful lesions. The risks of the operation are incomplete removal or missed neighbouring lesions or formation of a new lesion.

Self care (What can I do?)

Avoidance of the circumstances that would exacerbate the pain i.e repeated injuries of the affected nail or exposure to cold (i.e fridge, cold water).

Where can I get more information?

Web: www.dermnetnz.org/topics/glomus-tumour/

BRITISH HAIR AND NAIL SOCIETY PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET PRODUCED SEPTEMBER 2019

This leaflet is produced by Dr Athina Fonia for the British Hair and Nail Society