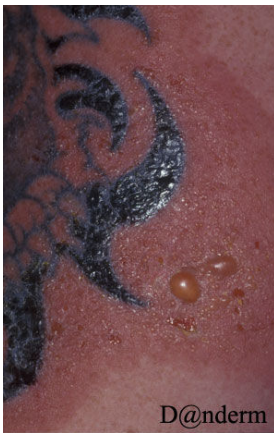


Blistering Disorders

- In general, blistering skin disorders can be divided into: immunobullous diseases (e.g. bullous pemphigoid, pemphigus vulgaris), blistering skin infections (e.g. herpes simplex) and other (e.g. porphyria cutanea tarda).
- The fragility of blisters depends on the level of split within the skin – an intra-epidermal split (a split within the epidermis) causes blisters to rupture easily; whereas a sub-epidermal split (a split between the epidermis and dermis) causes blisters to be less fragile.
- The common causes of blisters are impetigo (*see below*), insect bites, herpes simplex infection (*see page 34*), herpes zoster infection (*see page 36*), acute contact dermatitis, pompholyx (vesicular eczema of the hands and feet, *see below*) and burns.
- Bullous pemphigoid (*see page 53*) and pemphigus vulgaris (*see page 54*) are uncommon conditions due to immune reaction within the skin.



Bullous impetigo in a new tattoo



Pompholyx

Learning outcomes:

1. Ability to recognise common causes of blisters
2. Ability to recognise:
 - Bullous pemphigoid
 - Pemphigus vulgaris

Bullous pemphigoid

Description

- A blistering skin disorder which usually affects the elderly

Cause

- Autoantibodies against antigens between the epidermis and dermis causing a sub-epidermal split in the skin

Presentation

- Tense, fluid-filled blisters on an erythematous base
- Lesions are often itchy
- May be preceded by a non-specific itchy rash
- Usually affects the trunk and limbs (mucosal involvement less common)

Management

- General measures – wound dressings where required, monitor for signs of infection
- Topical therapies for localised disease - topical steroids
- Oral therapies for widespread disease – oral steroids, combination of oral tetracycline and nicotinamide, immunosuppressive agents (e.g. azathioprine, mycophenolate mofetil, methotrexate, and other)



Bullous pemphigoid

Pemphigus vulgaris

Description

- A blistering skin disorder which usually affects the middle-aged

Cause

- Autoantibodies against antigens within the epidermis causing an intra-epidermal split in the skin

Presentation

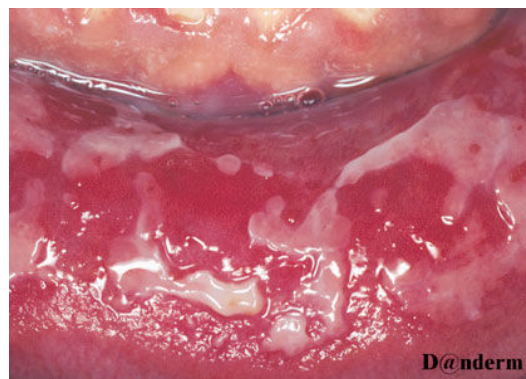
- Flaccid, easily ruptured blisters forming erosions and crusts
- Lesions are often painful
- Usually affects the mucosal areas (can precede skin involvement)

Management

- General measures – wound dressings where required, monitor for signs of infection, good oral care (if oral mucosa is involved)
- Oral therapies – high-dose oral steroids, immunosuppressive agents (e.g. methotrexate, azathioprine, cyclophosphamide, mycophenolate mofetil, and other)



Pemphigus vulgaris



Pemphigus vulgaris affecting the oral mucosa