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PEER REVIEWED

A Woman With a Hyperpigmented Macule on Her Wrist

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Citation:

Vance P, Scott M, Keene J. A woman with a hyperpigmented macule on her wrist [published online September 25, 2019]. Consultant360.

A 41-year-old woman presented to the clinic for a wellness check. She has no specific complaints and no relevant medical history aside from having had a scabies infection as a child. She had immigrated to the United States from Egypt 10 years ago.

Her family history was unremarkable, and her vital signs were normal. Dermatologic examination revealed a 7 × 7-mm hyperpigmented macule on the flexor aspect of her right wrist (**Figure**). The borders are poorly defined and irregular. The remainder of the physical examination findings are unremarkable.



What is the best next step in management?

- A. Skin scraping with potassium hydroxide preparation
- B. Procedural removal of the lesion and surrounding tissue
- C. Prescribe hydroquinone cream, 4%, once daily
- D. Biopsy for additional analysis
- E. No treatment is needed

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Answer: E, no treatment is needed.

In certain areas of the world, particularly Egypt, Christians often differentiate themselves from members of other religions by applying a small tattoo to their bodies. Common areas include the flexor or extensor aspects of the wrists, the anterior forearm, the deltoid region, and the forehead.

The symbol on this patient's wrist is known as the Coptic cross and is used by Coptic Christians to outwardly express their faith, identify other believers, and even gain access to religious sites. Coptic cross tattoos are administered to children as young as 2 months of age.

Since this is a tattoo and not a dermatological pathology, no further workup or treatment is warranted.