Image Challenge

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A 40-year-old man, in the critical care unit, was found to have these skin lesions (Fig. 1) during daily rounds. No new drug had been introduced in the last 3 days and he had no known skin disorder. He did not complain of any symptoms related to the lesions.

What is the diagnosis? What is the treatment?

Fig. 1: Lesions on the patient's skin

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Answer

This patient has miliaria crystallina (sometimes called sweat bubbles in colloquial terms).

Treatment

Cooling and drying of involved areas and avoiding occlusive dresses. Prolonged covering of patients with thick blankets in the critical care may lead to this condition (due to prolonged hyperthermia). Thus, patients in the CCU should not be covered round the clock.

Preventive Treatment

Frequent change of posture to prevent occlusion of sweat gland ducts in back and flexor areas.