

Images/Instrument in Dermatology/Dermatosurgery

Pseudo-koebnerization in viral warts

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Received: 08 March 2026

Accepted: 19 March 2026

Published: 05 May 2026

DOI

10.25259/CSDM_45_2026

Quick Response Code:



Pseudo-koebnerization refers to the appearance of new lesions of an infectious dermatosis along sites of trauma due to autoinoculation of the pathogen, rather than a true isomorphic response. It is commonly seen in viral infections such as cutaneous warts caused by human papillomavirus (HPV). Minor trauma – scratching, shaving, friction, or maceration – facilitates implantation of viral particles into adjacent skin, leading to the linear spread of lesions along the direction of injury.^[1]

In viral warts, this phenomenon often manifests as linear or grouped verrucous papules corresponding to scratch marks or areas subjected to repeated friction. The lesions typically have a rough, hyperkeratotic surface and may show punctate black dots representing thrombosed capillaries.

In the present case, the image demonstrates multiple linear streaks of small verrucous papules over the extensor aspect of the elbow, arranged along scratch lines. These papules follow a linear pattern suggestive of autoinoculation, representing pseudo-koebnerization. In addition, a larger hyperkeratotic wart with a rough, papillomatous surface is visible inferiorly, likely representing the primary lesion from which viral particles were spread through scratching [Figure 1].



Figure 1: Multiple linear rows of small verrucous papules arranged along scratch marks over the extensor aspect of the elbow. A larger hyperkeratotic, papillomatous wart is seen inferiorly, likely serving as the primary lesion from which viral spread occurred.

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Recognition of pseudo-koebnerization is clinically important because it highlights the role of mechanical spread of HPV, emphasizing patient counseling regarding avoidance of scratching and early treatment of primary lesions to limit dissemination.

Ethical approval: Institutional review board approval is not required.

Declaration of patient consent: The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms. In the form, the patient has given consent for their images and other clinical information to be reported in the journal. The patient understands that the patient's names and initials will not be published and due efforts will be made to conceal their identity, but anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

Financial support and sponsorship: Nil.

Conflicts of interest: There are no conflicts of interest.

Use of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technology for manuscript preparation: The authors confirm that there was no use of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technology for assisting in the writing or editing of the manuscript and no images were manipulated using AI.

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How to cite this article: Gupta S, Chopra D. Pseudo-koebnerization in viral warts. *CosmoDerma*. 2026;6:48. doi: 10.25259/CSDM_45_2026