

A Massage Therapist's Guide to Pathology: Critical Thinking, Practical Application

Chapter 2 Integumentary System Conditions **Acne Vulgaris**

Definition

- Many small localized infections in pilosebaceous units
- Face, neck, upper back



Definition

- Most common skin disease in US
 - 90% of adolescents
 - Some adults continue



Pathophysiology

- Multifactorial
 - Genetic predisposition
 - Androgens and accelerated sebum production
 - Overactive sebaceous glands + blocking keratin
 - Colonization with *P. acnes* bacteria
 - May be related to disruption in skin microbiome



Signs and Symptoms

- Pimples: raised, red, painful papules
 - May accrue pus
- Cysts: deep in dermis
 - May develop draining sinus, permanent scarring
- Open comedomes (blackheads)
- Closed comedomes (whiteheads)



Acne Vulgaris



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Treatment

- Aim for a healthy level of sebum production
 - Don't touch the face
 - Some dietary adjustments may help
 - Wash twice daily with gentle soap
 - Medical intervention if necessary
 - Manual extraction, chemical peels, aesthetic repairs



Medications

- Benzoyl peroxide, sulfur, salicylic acid, other topicals
- Topical retinoids alone or in combination with other medications
- Oral antibiotic for moderate-to-severe cases
- Hormonal therapy





Apply What You Know

Risks

- Inflammation and open sores locally contraindicate massage
- Be careful about lubricants – some may aggravate this situation



Apply What You Know

Benefits

- Nonjudgmental touch is especially useful
- No worries regarding previous scarring





Apply What You Know

Accommodations

- Consider a water-based lotion
- Suggest that the client shower soon
- (Do not remove excess oil with alcohol)