

## this issue

Let us answer some questions you may have

What is a spindle cell tumour?

What's caused this finger to be swollen and sore?

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### What is a spindle cell tumour?

You remove a relatively benign looking skin lesion from the scalp of an elderly gentleman. The pathologist reports the lesion as a spindle cell tumour. What does this mean? Well, it could mean a wide range of things, ranging from benign to highly malignant. Spindle cell tumours are amongst some of the most poorly understood tumours. Why? Because often the diagnosis is not clear, and if it is clear, then the management for that type of tumour has not clearly been defined.

Spindle cell tumours are a heterogeneous group of skin lesions. Histologically, they resemble each other, with spindle cells throughout the specimen. They require special staining techniques to identify the actual subtype of tumour. As mentioned, spindle cell tumours can represent a wide range of tumours. The differential diagnoses include:

- **Benign**  
Dermatofibroma, Spitz nevus, Dermatofibromatosis disorders (eg. Duiptren's disease)
- **Intermediate**  
Desmoid tumours, Atypical fibroxanthoma (AFX)
- **Malignant**  
Poorly differentiated squamous cell carcinoma, Spindle cell variant of malignant melanoma  
Malignant fibrous histiocytoma (MFH), Dermatofibrosarcoma protuberans (DFSP)  
Other soft tissue sarcomas

So, as it can be seen, a diagnosis of spindle cells tumour can have wide ranging implications. The important points to remember when you receive a histology report with a diagnosis of spindle cell tumour are to ensure that the pathologist has performed more stains to identify the type of tumour **and** to refer cases to a specialist early, as often they require wide resection margins and adjuvant therapy.

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### What has caused this finger to be swollen and sore?

A netballer presents to you with a painful swollen finger wanting to know why she cannot bend it after being hit with the ball on that finger. You perform an x-ray that is reported as being normal. So what next?

The hand has many intricate functions. In order to perform these functions, it has many bones, ligaments, tendons, muscles and nerves. When assessing what has caused this finger to be painful and swollen it is important to remember all of these structures and assess them independently.

The most likely cause of this person's symptoms will be a ligamentous injury. There are many ligaments in the hand, but the most commonly injured are the collateral and volar plate ligaments of the proximal interphalangeal joint (PIPJ).

Testing for these ligaments is relatively easy. Hyper extension of the PIPJ will test the volar plate, whilst ulnar and radial deviation of the PIPJ will test the collateral ligaments. Pain will indicate an injured ligament.

Management of these injuries is often conservative with hand therapy. However, depending on the severity, they may require operative intervention.

As I say to my patients, if you injured your ankle ligaments you would be on crutches until they healed and you could walk. The same principle applies to injured finger ligaments. They often need to be splinted, hand therapy and sometimes require surgery.

Neglecting to treat these injuries often results in a finger that is painful and stiff in the future. By this stage, it is often too late to rectify the situation.

WPRS will be hosting another education event, this time **'BOTOX® - help for migraines and teeth-grinding'**. You will receive information shortly. Be sure to register early for the session, our 'Suture Workshop' was a hive of activity with 20 GP's in attendance.



Offering facial rejuvenation  
with Cosmetic Physician



**Dr Emma Renouf**  
MBBS (Hons), BMedSci, FRACGP

Emma is a General Practitioner and Cosmetic Physician, living and practicing in Warrnambool.

She is pleased to offer facial rejuvenation with Botox® and dermal fillers, and treatment for migraines and teeth-grinding with Botox®.

Weekly appointments are available and a Doctor's referral is not required.

A range of medical grade skincare products are also available through consultation with our specialist team.



20 GP's took part in our recent 'Suture Workshop'