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ACNE VULGARIS AND ITS RATIONAL TREATMENT.*

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Acne vulgaris is a chronic affection of the skin, generally limited to the face, neck and shoulders. It is possible for the disease to exist on any part of the body where sebaceous glands are to be found, but it is rarely seen on the scalp and the extremities.

Age is an important factor in its etiology and course, as it is essentially a disease of adolescence and even if untreated tends in the course of years to disappear.

The first stage of the disease is characterized by a hyperkeratosis of the epidermis which affects not only the surface of the skin but also the mouths of the follicles and sebaceous ducts, giving rise to comedones. Comedones are made up of epidermal scales, generally arranged in concentric layers around a core of sebum. The outer end is usually colored black, which is due partly to deposit of pigment and partly to dirt. The hyperkeratosis appears to be due to a slow process of cornification, as both the granular and corneous layers of the epidermis are thickened, whilst the mucous layer remains normal. A comedo is sometimes thrown off, but it is more frequently held in position by the constricted orifice of the follicle, thus preventing the escape of sebum.

* Written specially for the DOMINION MEDICAL MONTHLY.