

Introduction

Balanitis xerotica obliterans (BXO), also known as lichen sclerosus of the penis is a dermatological (skin) condition affecting the male genitalia. The cause of BXO is unclear.

[Picture Credit: Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans]



Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans (BXO)

Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans (BXO) commonly occurs on the foreskin and glans penis. Atrophic white patches appear on the affected area, and commonly, a whitish ring of indurated (hardened) tissue usually forms near the tip that may prevent retraction of the foreskin.

Incidence of Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans (BXO) in South Africa

The National Cancer Registry (2013) does not provide information regarding the incidence of Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans (BXO) because it is not a cancerous condition itself, however, if neglected it may develop into cancer of the penis.

According to the National Cancer Registry (2014) the following number of penile cancer cases was histologically diagnosed in South Africa during 2014:

Group 2014	Number of Cases	Lifetime Risk	Percentage of All Cancers
All Males	172	1:1 106	0,40%
Asian males	4	1:864	0,43%
Black males	138	1:1 106	1,24%
Coloured males	11	1:1 692	0,26%
White males	19	1:1 775	0,09%

The frequency of histologically diagnosed cases of penile cancer in South Africa for 2014 was as follows (National Cancer Registry, 2014):

Group 2014	0 – 19 Years	20 – 29 Years	30 – 39 Years	40 – 49 Years	50 – 59 Years	60 – 69 Years	70 – 79 Years	80+ Years
All males	0	6	27	60	28	24	13	4
Asian males	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0
Black males	0	5	21	52	26	16	4	3
Coloured males	0	1	1	2	1	4	2	0
White males	0	0	3	4	1	3	7	1

Signs and Symptoms of Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans (BXO)

Early in its course, balanitis xerotica obliterans [BXO] is relatively asymptomatic with only mild visually observable changes of the penis and glans. Symptoms occurring with time and progression of BXO may include the following:

- Itching
- Burning sensation
- Reduced sense of touch and feeling of the glans penis
- Difficulty in passing urine
- Painful erection
- Decrease in urinary force
- Inflammation of the urethra (urethritis)
- Possible urethral discharge
- Inability to retract the foreskin (uncircumcised men)
- Inability to return a retracted foreskin back over the head of the penis (uncircumcised men)

Causes of Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans (BXO)

The cause of this condition is not altogether known

Complications of Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans (BXO)

Balanitis Xerotica obliterans (BXO) can result in stenosis (narrowing) and the obliteration of the external opening of the urethra. A significant number of patients with penile malignancy have a history of having had BXO.

Medical Treatment of Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans (BXO)

No consistently effective treatment has been developed for Balanitis Xerotica obliterans [BXO], however, the following therapies may have varying degrees of reported success.

Topical steroids in the management of mild BXO. Steroid-based creams are ineffective in persons with established scarring.

Surgical Treatment of Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans (BXO)

Surgical intervention may include:

- Circumcision (surgical removal of the foreskin)
- Dilating or surgically correcting meatal narrowing

Medical Disclaimer

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November 2017

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