

CASE 32-2

A 42-year-old man has a 3-month history of pruritic papules on his wrist, back, and lower legs.



What is the one mostly likely diagnosis?

- (A) Lichen simplex chronicus
- (B) Nummular dermatitis
- (C) Tinea corporis
- (D) Psoriasis vulgaris
- (E) Lichen planus

The correct answer is (E), lichen planus.

The classic primary lesions of cutaneous lichen planus are violaceous, flat-topped papules with lace-like scale, and distinct, sharp borders. They are often characterized by pruritus. The volar wrist and flexor surface of the arms are commonly involved. However, lichen planus can involve multiple body areas including the scalp, genitalia, and oral mucosa. This disease can be chronic, lasting several months to years. It may be associated with medications or hepatitis C infection.

Nummular dermatitis, psoriasis, and lichen simplex chronicus are more commonly located on extensor surfaces. Tinea corporis commonly presents as annular pink-red plaques with peripheral scale.