

CASE 39-2

A 40-year-old man presents with a 6-week history of flat-topped purple papules on the shaft and head of the penis. He has similar lesions on the flexor wrists and lower legs.



What is the one most likely diagnosis?

- (A) Psoriasis
- (B) Human papilloma (HPV) warts
- (C) Secondary syphilis
- (D) Lichen planus
- (E) Molluscum contagiosum

The correct answer is (D), Lichen planus.

Lichen planus typically presents with discrete, purple flat-topped papules on the skin, oral or genital areas. The flexor wrists are a common site of involvement.

Patients with genital HPV rarely have non-genital lesions. Molluscum contagiosum in adults is typically sexually transmitted and the lesions are primarily on the genitals, buttocks, thighs and lower abdomen. It would be uncommon to see lesions on the arms. The genital lesions of secondary syphilis present as soft pink papules or polyps. Lesions of secondary syphilis typically occur on the palms and not on the wrists.