

LARYNX (VOCAL CORD NODULE)

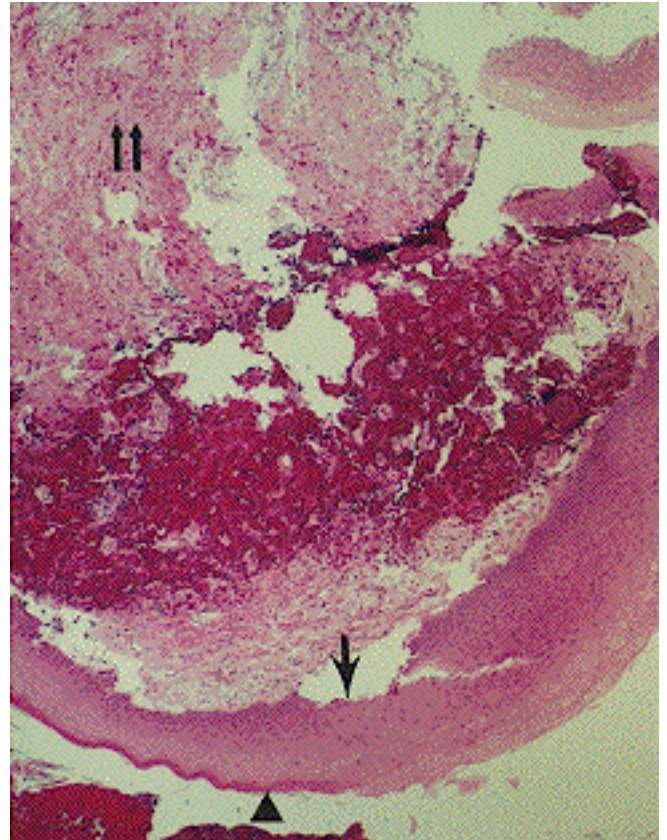
Vocal cord nodules are seen in men more than women and are attributed to misuse of the voice and heavy smoking. They are located on the true vocal cords at the junction of the anterior one third and the posterior two thirds of the cords. They are not neoplastic. Hyperkeratosis is common where the nodule meets or “kisses” a similar nodule on the opposite cord.

Other nodules are made of hyalinized collagen which may be confused with amyloid. Many of these nodules are quite vascular and almost hemangiomatous. Tissues submitted to the pathologist as “vocal cord nodules” may vary considerably due to inaccuracy of clinical diagnosis. Some “nodules” undoubtedly would better be described clinically as polyps or even granulomas.

Vocal cord nodule. This may represent organizing/recanalizing hemorrhage or organizing thrombosis in pre-existing vascular channels. No epithelium is seen.

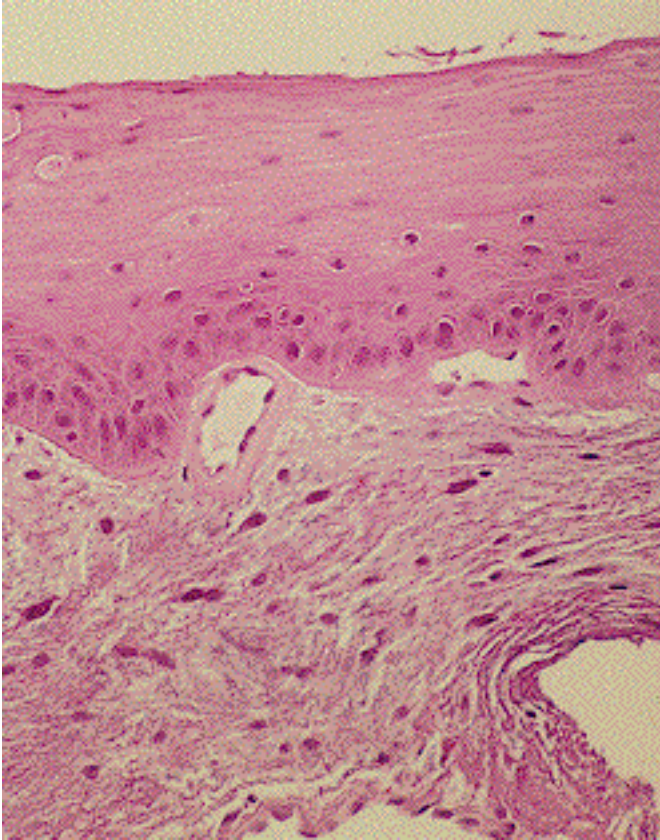


Vocal cord nodule, similar to the prior nodule. Recent hemorrhage and granulation tissue (double arrows) covered with thick layer of squamous epithelium (arrow) and some keratin (triangle).



Laryngeal papilloma. This specimen was submitted as a "nodule" but represents a laryngeal squamous papilloma of the human papilloma virus type and likely will recur. Koilocytosis is indicated by arrow. It is not what the clinician or pathologist would call a vocal cord nodule.





Vocal cord nodule. Epithelium of a vocal cord nodule typically shows no dysplasia and a distinct basement membrane.

Vocal cord polyp is a term that overlaps the term vocal cord nodule. Both are better used as clinical than pathologic terms. Sometimes a vocal cord polyp may be only an extremely edematous change in otherwise fairly normal tissue and exist along the entire length of the true vocal cord. It is almost invariably caused by cigarette smoking and it lowers the pitch of the voice markedly, so that women with the condition gain a baritone voice. Treatment of any of these types of laryngeal lesions, due to repeated trauma, is to reduce or stop the trauma (a speech therapist is valuable) or to surgically remove the lesion. *Myxedema* increases connective tissue mucins in many parts of the body and also in the larynx where the vocal cords become thickened causing a lowering of the vocal pitch.