

PILONIDAL SINUS: A HIGH-INCIDENCE DISEASE AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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INTRODUCTION

We have chosen the above title to emphasize the impact and frequency of this disease among young people. Indeed, pilonidal sinus infection is an affliction which almost exclusively strikes persons in this age group.

Pilonidal sinus may be described as a serious disruptive illness, when one considers such attendant features as the pain produced by the pilonidal abscess, periodic aggravations in the sufferer's condition, almost continual suppuration through the fistulous orifices, and long perioperative periods interfering with regular activities.

This is a condition which appears chiefly in adolescents or young adults who have dropped out of work, school, or sports activities. Repeated disruption in their pattern of life and a resulting sense of personal failure serve to aggravate the social and psychological consequences of the disease at a time of life which is usually characterized by energy and optimism. Their handicap prevents them from living a normal and rewarding life.

The number of patients who have been treated by us over the past 13 years and the problems evidenced by them have induced us to deepen our investigations into this matter in order to prevent the disease as far as this is possible. We have adopted a surgical technique that minimizes the length of the postoperative period and also complications and recurrences.

We begin prevention during the first consultation, explaining the origin of the illness, the need for daily hygiene and for keeping the area free of hair by periodic shaving or depilation with wax or cream. This must be done with all patients, from the moment when the symptoms first make their appearance up to when the patient undergoes surgery, and for a long period of time thereafter. The goal