KERATOSIS OBTURANS
Clinical Aspects

- Failure of EAC epithelial migration
- Accumulation of keratin debris
- Requires regular cleaning
- Gradual canal erosion if not
- Risk of granulations, osteitis
Keratosis Obturans. 1. Normal EAC epithelium migrates laterally from the drum, cleaning the ear. 2. Failure causes a plug of keratin, then erosion in the deep canal.
Hard keratin mass occluding the deep canal. May resemble routine debris until syringing or other removal attempts are frustrated.
Keratin mass in the deep EAC. Operating microscope view. The debris may be cheesy and friable, making removal piecemeal and often protracted.
A keratin cast removed from a keratosis site en masse, with some discomfort.
A silvery keratin cast of the EAC removed intact from a keratosis.
Hard keratin may form on the drum itself causing deafness or irritating rustling.
Keratin sheets removed with micro-alligator forceps. Friable debris may prolong such cleaning.
Erosion of the Lt postero-inferior canal subsequent to chronic keratin accumulation. A small patch of chronic myringitis persists at 9 o’clock.
Deep erosion of the floor of the canal, now infection-free after regular cleaning.
A scalloped-out EAC floor, resulting from a keratosis that has been subjected to repeated cleaning, and is now becoming dormant.

© Bruce Black MD
Marked erosion of the canal floor. Drum seen in the deep canal, left.
EAC erosion from an active keratosis. Chronic osteitis is causing persistent debris accumulation.
Severe keratotic erosion of the deep canal. Active myringitis persists in the erosion, and a small perforation into the middle ear cleft has formed at 2 o’clock.
Active osteitis of the deep anal floor. Removal of spicules of infected bone, repeated cleaning, and sometimes surgery are necessary to control the problem.
Advancing keratosis obturans, coronal CT view. The deep EAC floor is severely eroded; the drum has been perforated and fluid fills the middle ear. Keratin in the lateral EAC.
KERATOSIS OBTURANS

Summary

- Failed EAC epithelial migration
- Often overlooked during formation
- Requires regular cleaning: cleaning requires expert care
- Neglect causes gradual canal erosion, granulations, osteitis