

Sarcoptes scabiei Infestation



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A 24-YEAR-OLD MAN AND HIS FIANCÉE HAD PRURITUS OF TWO MONTHS' duration. They had similar skin lesions, with burrows on the webs between their fingers. A specimen obtained from scrapings of the woman's hand was prepared and examined with the use of a scanning electron microscope. The scabies infestations were successfully treated by overnight application of 5 percent permethrin cream.

Scabies is an infestation caused by the mite *Sarcoptes scabiei* var. *hominis*. The mites are generally between 100 and 400 μm in length. They enter the stratum corneum of the epidermis. After four to six weeks, sensitization occurs and skin lesions develop. Detection of the mite, its eggs, or its feces (scybala) during light-microscopical examination of a mineral-oil preparation of skin scrapings confirms the diagnosis.

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