

## Case 73

# A painful mass at the anal verge



Figure 73.1

Figure 73.1 shows the anal verge of a 60-year-old man who had put up with his prolapsing and bleeding piles for a number of years without bothering to seek medical help. Instead, he used various 'haemorrhoid ointments' without much success and kept an incontinence pad within his underpants.

Two days before admission to hospital, while straining at stool, a large mass prolapsed out of his anal verge and bled, and, for the first time, his piles became extremely painful.

He tried to push the mass back, but without any success, even when lying in a hot bath. Eventually the severe pain and now a nasty smell made him report to his doctor, who sent him straight to the Emergency Department.

### What is this complication of haemorrhoids called?

Prolapsed strangulated piles.

### What is the cause of this complication of haemorrhoids?

The piles have prolapsed and become gripped by the anal sphincter, the venous return has become occluded and thrombosis has occurred. Suppuration and even ulceration of the thrombosed mass will follow.

### What is the diagnostic symptom?

The pain – it is only in this complication that haemorrhoids cause anal pain.

### What is the standard management of this condition?

Give opiate analgesia for the severe pain. Standard oral medication is insufficient. Put the patient to bed with the foot of the bed elevated and apply cold compresses.

### What would be the outcome of this management and is there any alternative, more radical treatment?

The piles fibrose, often with complete or partial cure. However, the process may take 2 or 3 weeks and many surgeons carry out an emergency haemorrhoidectomy for this condition.