Background
Verrucae are benign lesions that appear in skin and mucosa owing to infection with papillomaviruses. Although some lesions grow rapidly, other lesions may regress spontaneously over several weeks or over long period of time, whereas some persist without any change. Laser therapy has been used as an effective treatment of recalcitrant warts. The lasers that have been used are CO₂ laser, pulsed dye laser, and Nd:YAG laser.

Objective
To compare the therapeutic efficacy and adverse effects of long-pulsed Nd:YAG laser versus ablative carbon dioxide laser in the treatment of recalcitrant warts.

Patients and methods
Twenty patients with recalcitrant warts were included. Ten patients were treated by ablative CO₂ laser at wavelength of 10 600 nm for one session, whereas the other 10 patients were treated by long-pulsed Nd:YAG of 1064 nm for one session per month for a maximum of three sessions. Patients were followed up monthly for 3 months after the last session.

Results
Although complete healing occurred in 100% of patients of CO₂ laser group after one session and after variable number of sessions in Nd:YAG laser group, recurrence of lesions was reported in 50% of patients treated by CO₂ laser, whereas it was in only 10% of patients treated by Nd:YAG laser (P= 0.02).

Conclusion
CO₂ laser carries the advantages of being safe, with few sessions, but with more time for healing, hazards of fumes to the patients and practioners, and high recurrence rate. Nd:YAG laser requires multiple treatment sessions, but has rapid healing, low recurrence rate and fewer complications.