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On the Cover

What's the diagnosis? Urine uric acid crystals as viewed under non-polarized (left side) and polarized (right side) illumination (400× magnification). Uric acid crystals form in acidic urine, typically pH < 6.0, and elevated urine uric acid is not always present. Uric acid crystals are most often rhomboid plates, as seen in the figure, or rosettes as opposed to the needle shaped monosodium urate crystals found in joint fluid of patients with acute gouty arthritis. Under non-polarized light urine uric acid crystals are colorless or may have a yellow or reddish-brown hue; under polarized light they appear polychromatic. (Image and text provided by Paul M. Palevsky, MD, FASN, Renal Section, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System and Renal-Electrolyte Division, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Pittsburgh, PA)