

Cysticercosis of the Tongue

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ABSTRACT

Cysticercosis is a condition in which a human being acts as the intermediate host of *Taenia solium*, a pork tape worm. The oral mucosa is an uncommonly involved site. A rurally living 35 year old vegetarian female presented with a swelling over the right side of her tongue of seven months duration. Histopathology of excisional biopsy revealed it to be cysticercosis. Diagnosis of cysticercosis was clinically unsuspected. The patient was referred to the general medical clinic for further treatment.

Keywords: cysticercosis; oral; rare disease; *Taenia solium*.

INTRODUCTION

Cysticercosis is a condition characterized by the occurrence of lumps containing the larvae of *Taenia Solium*. It occurs following ingestion of eggs of *Taenia Solium* through contaminated water or food. The cysts are seen in different regions of the body including striated muscle, subcutaneous tissues, the nervous system and the eye.¹

The *Taenia solium* is found in the small intestine of men; who act as the definitive host. The pig is the intermediate host. When undercooked and contaminated pork is eaten, the larvae reach the intestine where they develop into adult tapeworms.² Man can also act as intermediate host.³

CASE REPORT

A 35 year old vegetarian female from the Kabhre district of Nepal presented to the dental department of Patan Hospital with a history of a swelling over the right side of her tongue. This had been noticeable for seven months. She also complained of migrating 'lumps' in different parts of body having occurred intermittently for one year.

Previously she had attended a local pharmacy and had taken some medication, suspected to be antibiotic; although this is not recorded or known. The lesion on the tongue gradually progressed and she had difficulty in speech and eating due to the size.

No history of visual disturbances, seizures or headaches were reported. She did not use cigarettes or tobacco. She had a history of regular high consumption of home brew alcohol of unknown strength. On initial inspection no obvious swellings were noted. The cervical and the submandibular lymph nodes were not palpably enlarged.

Oral examination revealed a well defined, non tender, firm nodular lesion with smooth surface approximate 1.5 cm in diameter on the right dorsal tongue. The overlying mucosa was intact. The routine haematological and urine test was normal. The lesion was provisionally diagnosed as a benign fibroma.

Excision biopsy of the lesion was performed under local anaesthesia and subjected to histopathological examination. The microscopic results showed a thick fibrous capsule surrounded by inflammatory cells. Inside the cyst, typical invaginated segments representing the globular scolex with suckers (head of *Taenia solium*) were seen (Figure 1).

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