

Heck's Disease-A Rare Case Report

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ABSTRACT

Heck's disease or Oral focal epithelial hyperplasia is a rare, benign, familial disorder, with no sex predilection. Clinically it presents as multiple, soft, circumscribed, sessile elevations of the oral mucosa. It is caused by infection with Human papillomavirus. It primarily occurs in children, but can also occur in young and middle-aged adults. We report a case of Heck's disease in an 8 year old boy who presented with a raised lesion in the tongue.

Key words: Heck's disease, Focal epithelial hyperplasia, Human papillomavirus, Tongue.

INTRODUCTION

Heck's disease is a rare condition described among Native Americans, and most commonly among the Eskimos of Greenland. It is a benign, familial disorder commonly affecting children, but can also occur in young and middle aged adults. There is no sex predilection. It presents as numerous soft, papules or plaques. They are usually 5 to 10 mm in diameter although they may coalesce to form larger lesions.^[1] They are commonly seen in the buccal, labial and lingual mucosa. Tonsillar and gingival lesions have also been reported. We report a case of Heck's disease in an 8 year old boy because of its rarity.

Case report

An 8-year-old-boy was brought to our skin OPD with complaints of white coloured, raised lesion over the tongue, for the past 1 year. It initially started as a small raised lesion, which gradually progressed to the present size. There was history of trauma and bleeding from the lesion due to frequent teeth biting. There was no history of pain. There was no history of difficulty in swallowing.

Dermatological examination revealed a single, white, plaque, of 1 × 1.5 cm in size on the anterior one third of the tongue. On palpation, it was soft, non tender, did not bleed on touch. Other mucosa, skin, scalp, palms and soles, hair and nails were normal. Systemic examination done was normal. Routine investigations done were normal. Biopsy was done under aseptic precautions and local anaesthesia. The histopathology revealed the oral epithelium with acanthosis and regular elongation of rete ridges which were wide and confluent. The thickened mucosa extends upwards. Cells with vacuolization were seen which were more prominent in the upper portion of the epithelium. A diagnosis of Heck's disease was made.

DISCUSSION

Oral focal epithelial hyperplasia synonym Heck's disease is a rare, benign, familial disorder caused by a viral infection. Papillomaviruses -HPV-13 and HPV-32 appear to be the causative agents for Heck's disease. There is no sex predilection. It usually affects children, but can also occur in young and middle-aged adults. It is commonly seen in the



Fig. 1: Oral focal epithelial hyperplasia or Heck's disease

buccal, labial and lingual mucosa, but involvement of the tonsillar and gingival areas are also reported. It presents as numerous soft, white, papules 5 to 10 mm in diameter. The individual lesions are broad based or slightly elevated as demarcated plaques. These are of the same colour as the oral mucosa, but may be pale or white in colour, discrete or confluent. Oral focal hyperplasia has been described in association with HIV infection.

This is a benign asymptomatic condition requiring only reassurance. The lesions may regress spontaneously in some cases^[2] or they may increase in size^[3,4,5], which may interfere with function that may require electrocoagulation. This case is reported because of its rarity.

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