



Case of Phthiriasis Palpebrum : Common Culprit with Uncommon Presentation

KEYWORDS

Phthiriasis palpebrum ,pubic lice,blephroconjunctivitis,

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ABSTRACT Since infestation of the eyelashes by pubic lice is relatively rare it might will be misdiagnosed as bacterial conjunctivitis allergic[11] conjunctivitis contact dermatitis, or seborrheic and rosaceablepharitis. Phthiriasis palpebraum ,caused by the phthirus pubis, is a rare cause of blepharoconjunctivitis, and is therefore often neglected.

Pubic lice infestation contributes 1-2% of total human population worldwide. In USA , it is about

2-10% especially in the sexually active age group.[1] [2]. Cases in india are under reported[11] due to the

Social stigma attached . These commonly infest hair of pubic and perianal regions. It is passed on by

Sexual contact or close physical contact. Infestation of phthirus pubis on eye brows or eyelashes could be caused by hand contact from the genital area to the eye. Occasionally ,isolated palpebral, involvement has been described. Infestation in children is not necessarily due to sexual abuse although this possibility should be kept in the mind. INFESTATION By this parasite is regarded as a marker of other STD infections like HIV, syphilis gonorrhoea.

Introduction:

Phthiriasis palpebrum is generally manifestation of phthiriasis pubis is now grouped under STDS. It is a useful tool in forensic medicine as in cases of rape and sexual abuse the host DNA can be identified from the blood meal of louse via PCR and GENE SEQUENCING[6][7].

Although pubic hair is their main habitat these lice are quite often found on the hairs of abdomen thigh and axilla. Rarely they may invade the eyebrows and eyelashes[22]. Its occurrence in different parts of the world has been reported from time to time ,by different authors [13][14][16][17][20][21][23][26][27]. But very few authors have reported[22][25] its occurrence from our country. Hence the case report.

Case History:

A fifty eight year old female patient from rural background came to the out patient department With repeated complaint of itching redness and watering of both the eyes with the duration of approximately four months. On examination, translucent egg structures (NITS) are found adherent to eyelashes. On slit lamp biomicroscopy examination showed lice and nits anchored to the eyelashes. She was treated outside with topical antibiotic and steroid combination with no relief. Her ocular examination i.e. cornea anterior chamber, fundus examination, visual acuity was normal. She needed presbyopic correction. Patient was well built and nourished and there was no other systemic illness .

Her eyelashes were treated under local proparacaine 0.5% and I advised ciprofloxacin ointment two times. She was referred to skin for further management and the patient advised on treatment to close contact ,improvement in personal hygiene to prevent reinfection. Patient improved lot on first follow up. but did not turn up to our out patient department.

Discussion:

Phthiriasis palpebre is an unusual cause of blephro conjunctivitis. Phthiriasis palpebrum is generally manifestation of phthiriasis pubis is now grouped under STDS. It is a useful tool in forensic medicine as in cases of rape and sexual abuse the host DNA can be identified from the blood meal of louse via PCR and GENE SEQUENCING[6][7]. Intense pruritus caused by the saliva of the louse (immunological reaction) lead to scratching inflammation eczema and super added

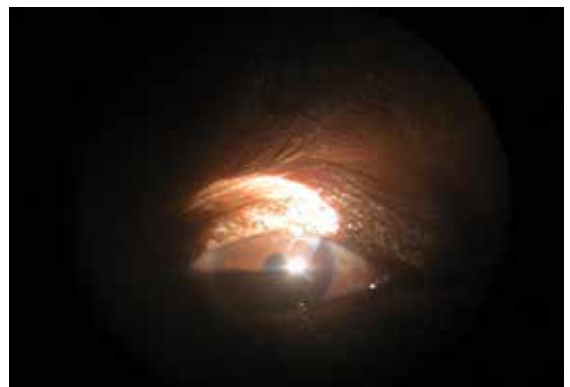
bacterial infection..

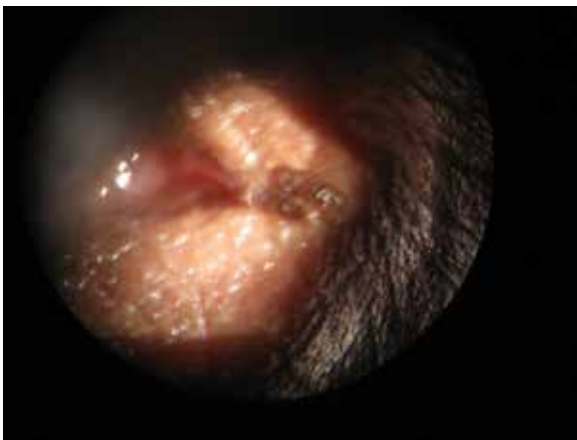
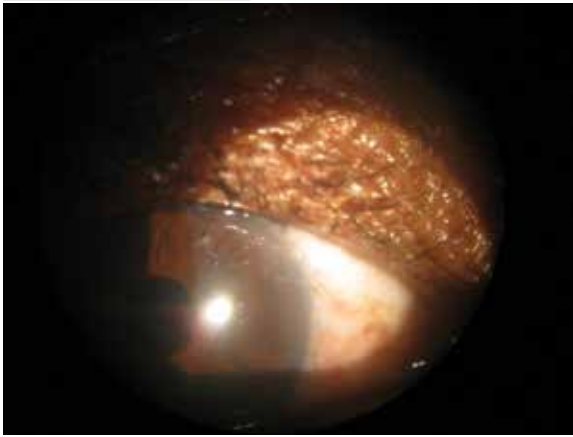
Blephritis due to pediculosis has been reported in children of 1 year ages []. Being almost the color of skin, they are not easily found and for this reason the infestation may exist for a long time before its recognition. But the presence of its nits on the eye lashes , which are readily visible, gives clue to the diagnosis of the condition.

Clinically patient may present with persistent erythema and pruritus of eyelid margins along with the accumulation of debris along with the eyelashes. On dermatological examination the adult p. pubis may be observed clinging to eyelashes or even buried within free margin. As a result of a semitransparent nature and ability to rapidly burrow into the lid margin can be easily missed when the eye is involved.

Patient must launder all bedding, clothing towels and wash clothes all of which may harbor adult lice and their eggs.

Manual removal of visible lice and eggs with forceps is standard therapy. Cryotherapy and argon laser [10] may allow destruction of ectoparasite but are associated with discomfort and risk of ocular injury. Inert ophthalmic ointments , petrolatum jelly can be used for suffocating lice and its nits . Equally good results may be obtained with drops or ointment of physostigmin 1% or tetra-ethylpyrophosphate, pyrethrum ointment or gamma benzene hexachloride 1% cream.





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