

## TRANSIENT LINGUAL PAPILLITIS AN ORAL MANIFESTATION OF COVID-19: A CASE PRESENTATION

**Dr. Prajul Mehta<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Ashwani Rana<sup>2\*</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>MD Dermatology CH Theog, Shimla, H.P. India.

<sup>2</sup>MD Dermatology CH Joginder-nagar, Mandi, H.P. India.

**\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Ashwani Rana**

MD Dermatology CH Joginder-nagar, Mandi, H.P. India.

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### ABSTRACT

COVID -19 infection has been reported to demonstrate different types of mucocutaneous manifestations. The timely and accurate identification of these mucocutaneous manifestations may play a key role in the early diagnosis and management of covid-19. Transient lingual papillitis is one of the most common mucocutaneous manifestation of covid infection. In this case report, we demonstrate a patient who presented with multiple painful papular lesions over the dorsum of tongue and without any other complaints except lethargy. The diagnosis of transient lingual papillitis was made and covid test was advised, leading to the early diagnosis of covid-19.

### INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 virus causes a wide spectrum of presentations from asymptomatic to symptomatic. COVID-19 patients may present with mucocutaneous manifestations. Therefore familiarity with these manifestations and timely identification helps in early diagnosis of covid-19 and decreases transmission of this deadly disease. Oral manifestations have also been reported but much less frequently.<sup>[1]</sup>

In some cases it may be an early sign of disease.

The palate and tongue were the most frequent locations, followed by gingiva and lips.<sup>[2]</sup>

Transient lingual papillitis is one of the most common oral manifestation of covid infection.

The term “transient lingual papillitis” (TLP) was introduced by Whitaker et al. 1996<sup>[3]</sup> and is an inflammatory disease involving the fungiform papillae of the tongue.

The etiology is unknown, but numerous triggering factors have been suspected, including “local irritation, stress, gastrointestinal upset, hormonal fluctuation, upper respiratory infections, viral infections, and sensitivity to foods, beverages, and oral hygiene products.”<sup>[4]</sup>

Oral cavity lesions are associated with COVID-19 and may be an early sign of disease.

### CASE REPORT

A 36 year old male presented with multiple painful lesions on dorsal surface of his tongue. He also complained of lethargy and myalgias.

A clinical examination revealed multiple white papules distributed over the dorsal and lateral surfaces of the tongue. (Figs. 1)

He was referred for COVID-19 testing and tested positive.

The patient was asked for oral rinses with saline and topical lignocaine gel was prescribed for burning sensations.



**Fig. 1: Multiple white papules over tongue.**

### DISCUSSION

COVID-19 patients have a wide range of clinical manifestations. It also manifests in the oral cavity.

The reported prevalence of cutaneous manifestations in patients with COVID-19 is variable, and ranges from 7.8% in the study by Giorgi *et al.*<sup>8</sup> to 20% in the study by Recalcati. There have been few reports, however, of oral manifestations, probably because of fear of infection during examination or the shortage of PPE during the first wave.<sup>[5]</sup>

The most common manifestations are transient U-shaped lingual papillitis, glossitis with patchy depapillation, and burning mouth syndrome.

The sites commonly involved in descending order are tongue (38%), labial mucosa (26%), palate (22%), gingiva (8%), buccal mucosa (5%), oropharynx (4%), and tonsil (1%).<sup>[6]</sup>

Transient lingual papillitis is among one of these oral manifestations.

It is an inflammatory disease involving the fungiform papillae of the tongue, that has an acute onset, is painful and transient in nature.<sup>[4]</sup>

The etiology of oral lesions in patients with COVID-19 is still uncertain and seems to be multi-factorial. The appearance of such lesions may be related to the direct or indirect action of SARS-CoV-2 on the oral mucosa cells, hypersensitivity of drugs used in the treatment of COVID-19 downgrading of the general state of health of the patient due to the disease and long period of hospitalization.<sup>[2]</sup>

There may be a link between COVID-19 and oral manifestations, but these signs may often go undetected due to a lack of intraoral examination during hospital admission.

This case presentation highlights the importance of full mouth examination and timely detection of these signs for early diagnosis and management of covid-19.

## CONCLUSION

Oral cavity lesions are associated with COVID-19 and may be an early sign of disease. Apart from dysgeusia, dry mouth, ulcers, and enanthema, clinicians should also check for tongue alterations, such as transient U-shaped tongue papillitis with or without tongue swelling and glossitis with patch depapillation.

## Conflict of interest

All the authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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