

MULTIPLE FLAT PAPULES ON THE LIPS OF CHILDREN

Case report. A 6-year-old Brazilian boy was referred by his pediatric dentist. The child presented with asymptomatic, coalescent, papillomatous lesions which had appeared six months previously and affected the mucosa of both lower and upper lips (Fig. 1, 2). The patient was otherwise healthy and his physical examination showed no significant abnormality. The family history revealed that the child's grandparents were of indigenous origin. The diagnosis of **focal epithelial hyperplasia (Heck's disease)** was done on clinical grounds, based on the following characteristic findings: a child of indigenous descent presenting with multiple, soft, pink, exophytic, flat-topped papules on the oral mucosa, especially involving the buccal and labial mucosa. Given the benign nature of these lesions which usually regress on their own, and the fact that there were no symptoms or esthetical concerns, the patient did not receive any treatment. He was controlled over a two-year period, during which no clinical alteration of the lesions was observed.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Fig. 1, 2: Heck's disease: asymptomatic, flat, confluent papules of the lip mucosa in a 6-year-old child.

Heck's disease is a HPV-associated oral disease that has been described in many countries of the world. This rare benign condition is more prevalent in south, central and north American Indians and their descendants (2), but other ethnic groups have been affected (3). The diagnosis of Heck's disease is strongly suggested by the clinical findings, but it may be confirmed by conventional histopathological examination and PCR analysis of paraffin-embedded tissue sections (1). Several treatment modalities have been proposed, such as scalpel surgery, cryotherapy, CO₂ laser therapy and topical imiquimod (6). In the case described here, the patient did not receive any treatment due to absence of complaints and esthetic concerns and because the focal epithelial hyperplasia frequently regresses on its own. In addition, the patient's parents refused any kind of surgery, including incisional biopsy.

Although Heck's disease is most commonly found in some ethnic groups such as Indians from South, Central or North America, a few isolated cases have been described in Europe and Asia (4, 6). An excellent review on the subject was recently published in UK (5). Thus, pediatric dermatologists should be aware of this viral disease affecting the oral mucosa of children from many parts of the world.

References

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