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Pediculosis Pubis - A Hidden Menace

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INTRODUCTION

Pediculosis pubis is an uncommon sexually transmitted infection caused by the parasite Pthirus pubis which belongs to the order Pthiraptera and family Pthiridae [1,2].

These Crab louse are commonly found on the coarse hairs of the body especially pubic hair, axillary hair and other regions like beard, moustache and even on eyelashes. The adult insects are about 2 mm long and exclusively feed on human blood. The insects reproduce by laying eggs. The female lies about 3-4 eggs in a day which hatches in about a week to enter nymph stage. This takes about 10 to 17 days to become an adult. This infection is usually spread through direct contact, particularly sexual contact. Fomites including clothes and bedding infested with the parasite can also spread the infection [3-5].

CASE

A 23 years old male patient came with complaints of itching all over the body for the past 3 months. Patient's history revealed homosexual exposure. On examination multiple greyish brown insects were visible of size 0.5 × 1 mm and multiple nits were seen in chest, armpits and pubic hair **(Figure 1)**. There was associated erythema secondary to severe pruritus multiple erythematous macules and scratch marks were seen on the affected region. Dermatoscopy revealed the insects to be Pthirus pubis, an ectoparasite **(Figure 2)** which is transmitted usually through sexual contact with infected person. The patient was screened for other STI s including HIV, Syphilis and Hepatitis B, which were negative. The patient was put on oral Ivermectin 12 mg as a single dose and was advised to repeat the same after a week. Topical Permethrin 5% was advised for local application all over the body for a month. The patient was instructed to disinfect the bedding and clothing in hot water and also was educated about safe sexual practices. The patient had a follow up after a month which showed complete cure from the infection **(Figures 3 and 4)**.

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Figure 1. Pthirus pubis under microscope.

Figure 2. Pthirus pubis attached to hair shaft.

Figure 3. Pubic lice attached to body hair.

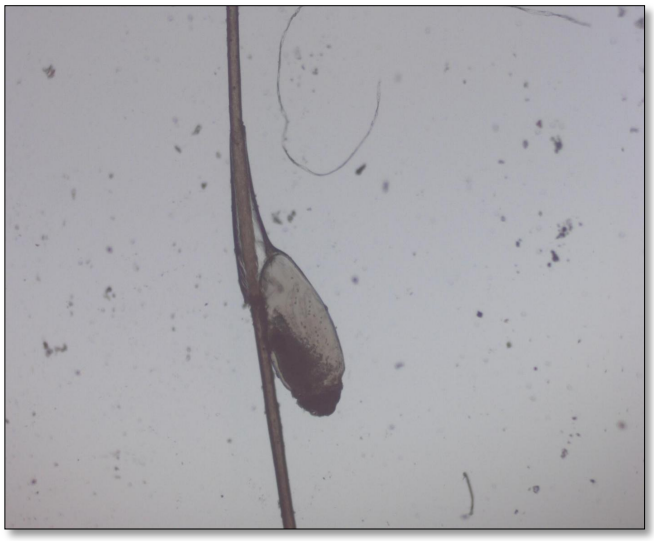

Figure 4. Nits of pthirus pubis attached to hair shaft.

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