

Clinical Image

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Hairy tongue in a chronic smoker

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Description

A 70 year old male presented with asymptomatic gold-brown hairy surface over the dorsum of tongue for last 2 months. He is a chronic smoker with daily intake of 3-4 bidis since 7 years. On examination, there were elongated golden-brown filiform papillae over dorsum of the tongue with fibres directed backwards towards the midline (Figure 1). Paramedian sparing was noted with peripheral yellowish elongated papillae.

Dermoscopy shows elongated filiform papillae with color variations from pink to white and golden brown over a pinkish background resembling “sea anemone” (Figure 2).

Hairy Tongue (HT) can be brown, yellow, green, blue, or even unpigmented. It usually occurs due to secondary infection by *Candida albicans* or *Bacillus subtilis varietas niger* [1]. Normally less than 1 mm in length, the elongated papillae can reach a length of 12-18 mm and width of 2 mm [2].

Its closest differential is pseudo-hairy tongue. “Pseudo-hairy tongue” is darkly stained or coated tongue in the absence of elongated filiform papillae [3]. Dermoscopy plays a vital tool in differentiating hairy tongue from pseudo-hairy tongue.



Figure 1: Multiple elongated golden-brown filiform papillae over dorsum of the tongue with fibres directed backwards towards the midline and few yellowish papillae on the peripheral tongue.

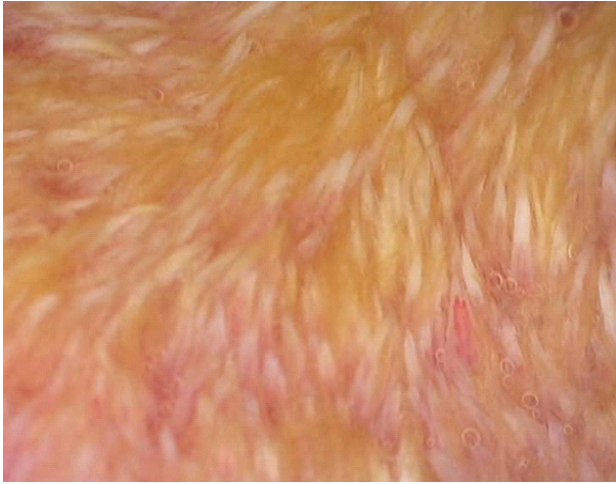


Figure 2: Dermoscopic image showing elongated filiform papillae with color variations from pink to white and golden brown or only pink -white or golden-white over a pinkish background resembling "sea anemone" (Taken with Dino-Lite AF4115ZT edge).

References

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