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Recurrent aphthous stomatitis: A case report

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Abstract

Recurrent aphthous stomatitis (RAS) or recurrent aphthous an ulcer (RAU) is a common disorder affecting 5% to 66% of examined adult patient groups. There may be a female predominance in some adult and child patient. We report a case of a 30-year old male patient presented a 2-year history of episodes of multiple recurrent ulcers on the ventral surface of anterior part of tongue. Topical application of Triamcinolone acetonide 0.1%, topical lignocaine and systemic vitamin B-complex, caused an improvement of pain, discomfort and healing of the aphthous ulcer. No side effects were recorded.

Keywords: Aphthae; Prednisolone; Mouth wash; Steroids; Multivitamins

1. Introduction

Aphthae are common oral lesions that affect approximately 10% to 20% of the population. The etiology of aphthous stomatitis is unknown but according to increasing evidence, its development has an immunogenic process that causes the ulceration of the involved oral mucosa [1, 2]

Similar-appearing lesions may arise in following systemic disorders:

- Behcet's disease [3-5]
- Sweet's syndrome [6]
- Cyclic neutropenia [7]
- Benign familial neutropenia [8]
- MAGIC syndrome [9]
- A periodic syndrome with fever and pharyngitis [10]
- Various nutritional deficiencies with or without underlying gastrointestinal disorders [11]

Several studies from the UK, United States, and Spain have demonstrated that hematinic deficiency (iron, folic acid, or vitamin B12) are twice as common in RAS patients than in controls [12, 13]

Recurrent Aphthous Ulcers (RAU) are usually classified into three different types: minor, major and herpiform RAU:

Case Report

A 30 year old male patient presented a 2-year history of episodes of multiple minor recurrent ulcers on the anterior ventral surface of the tongue. Patient had difficulty in eating and in speech. Clinical examination revealed multiple symptomatic ulcers with a perilesional erythematous halo covered with a pseudomembrane. The size of ulcers was less than 10 mm in diameter (Figure 1). The ulcers were not associated with any type of discharge. The ulcers were tender on palpation. The medical history and the family history were non-contributory. A clinical diagnosis of minor aphthous ulcers was made on the basis of the history and the clinical examinations.

The patient was subjected to a therapeutic regimen consisting of daily topical application of Triamcinolone acetonide 0.1%, topical lignocaine and systemic vitamin B-complex, caused an improvement of pain, discomfort and healing of the aphthous ulcer. Patient was advised to apply the topical lignocaine 4 times in a day half hour before meal and Triamcinolone acetonide 0.1% half hour after meal on the affected area. Patient was also advised to take vitamin B-complex once in a day. These medicines were advised for 7 days. Diet modification was also done. Patient was advised to take green vegetables and non-spicy food. Patient was recalled after 7 days for follow-up and reported complete relief of pain and there was no discomfort.

The ulcers were completely healed without scar formation

(Fig: 2). No side effects were recorded.

S. No.	Clinical Features	Minor RAU	Major RAU	Herptiform RAU
1	Age	Childhood	Puberty	After puberty
2	Gender	M=F	M=F	F>M
3	Sites	Labial mucosa, Buccal mucosa, floor of mouth	Labial mucosa, soft palate and fauces	Labial mucosa, buccal mucosa, lingual mucosa, palatal mucosa, gingival mucosa, floor of the mouth, pharynx
4	Size (mm)	<10	>10	1-2 Can be larger in case of fusion of ulcer
5	Number	1-5	1-10	10-100
6	Duration (days)	4-14	>30	<30
7	Rate of Recurrence (months)	1-4	<monthly	<monthly
8	Permanent scarring	Uncommon	Common	Uncommon



Fig 1: Multiple minor ulcers present on the anterior ventral surface of tongue.



Fig 2: Complete healing of the ulcers after 7 days.

Discussion

Because of its uncertain etiology and various clinical presentations, aphthous stomatitis remains a challenge for the oral and maxillofacial health care professionals. Most patients with RAU need no treatment because of the

mild nature of the disease. Some manage with maintenance of good oral hygiene, the right kind of toothpaste (without irritating sodium lauryl sulfate, e.g. Biotene) [14] and occasional palliative therapy for pain. Following medication are used for the management of RAU:

Mouthrinses	Chlorhexidine gluconate, Benzylamine hydrochloride, Betadine
Topical corticosteroids	Hydrocortisone hemisuccinate, Triamcinolone acetonide, Flucanide, Betamethasone valerate, Betamethasone-17-benzoate, Flumethasone pivate, Beclomethasone dipropionate,
Antibiotics	Topical tetracyclines
Immunomodulators	Levamisole, Colchicine, Gammaglobulins, Azathioprine, Dapsone, Thalidomide, Pentoxifylline, Prednisolone, Azelastine, Cyclosporine, Amlexonox,
Others	Systemic zinc sulphate, Sodium cromoglycate, Deglycyrrhizinated licorace, Low-energy laser

Haematologic work-up should be done including complete blood count, serum ferritin, folate and B-vitamin levels. In the case of deficiencies practitioners should start replacement therapies and/or make appropriate referrals [14].

Topical agents are the first choice of treatment for RAU. They are cheap, effective and safe. The Anti-microbial mouthwash use in RAU is intended to control microbial contamination and secondary infection. Tetracycline, an antibiotic mouthwash reduces ulcer size, duration and pain because of its ability to reduce not only secondary infection but also to inhibit collagenase activity [15].

Topical medications are easily washed away from the target area. This problem can be addressed by using different kinds of adhesive vehicles¹⁶ in combination with the drug. For example, strong topical corticosteroids when compounded with mucosal adherents are effective despite limited contact time. [14] Topical glucocorticoids that have demonstrated efficacy for RAU are flucanide, triamcinolone and clobetaso [17].

Conclusions

Recurrent aphthous stomatitis (RAS) or recurrent aphthous ulcers (RAU) remains a common oral mucosal disorder in most communities of the world. Proper systemic evaluation is important before prescribing the medication.

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