

Images in medicine

A purple swelling on the tongue

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Image in medicine

A painless, purple, dome shaped swelling was discovered on routine oral examination in a 20 year old male, near the right lateral border of the tongue. He revealed that the swelling had been growing in a subtle manner since 2 months, and he reported no history of trauma. It measured about 1.5x1.5 cm, surface appeared granular and was soft in consistency. Diascopic examination using a glass slide resulted in blanching, a feature characteristic of vascular and inflammatory lesions. Based on the clinical features a differential diagnosis of pyogenic granuloma, hemangioma, angiosarcoma and kaposi's sarcoma were considered. Later the lesion was excised in its entirety and histopathological examination suggested a diagnosis of 'cavernous hemangioma'. The healing was uneventful and no recurrence was noted during a 12 month follow up period. Hemangiomas are benign hamartomatous lesions that are slow growing, sessile or pedunculated, smooth or lobulated, red swellings which sometimes exhibit a bluish hue. Hemangiomas of the tongue need special attention due to their susceptibility to trauma from masticatory forces.



Figure 1: A painless purple swelling on the dorsum of the tongue