

Images in clinical medicine



A rare case of palatal perforation due to tertiary syphilis

 Surya Besant Natarajan,  Krishna Prasanth Balaann

Corresponding author: Surya Besant Natarajan, Department of Community Medicine, Sree Balaji Medical College and Hospital, Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research Institute, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. suryauk4@gmail.com

Received: 20 Oct 2021 - **Accepted:** 04 Mar 2022 - **Published:** 29 Jun 2022

Keywords: Tertiary syphilis, palatal perforation, untreated syphilis

Copyright: Surya Besant Natarajan et al. Pan African Medical Journal (ISSN: 1937-8688). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution International 4.0 License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Cite this article: Surya Besant Natarajan et al. A rare case of palatal perforation due to tertiary syphilis. Pan African Medical Journal. 2022;42(162). 10.11604/pamj.2022.42.162.32101

Available online at: <https://www.panafrican-med-journal.com//content/article/42/162/full>

A rare case of palatal perforation due to tertiary syphilis

Surya Besant Natarajan^{1,&}, Krishna Prasanth Balaann¹

¹Department of Community Medicine, Sree Balaji Medical College and Hospital, Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research Institute, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

&Corresponding author

Surya Besant Natarajan, Department of Community Medicine, Sree Balaji Medical College and Hospital, Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research Institute, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Image in medicine

Syphilis is a chronic inflammatory disease which is caused by the spirochete *Treponema pallidum* and is often sexually transmitted. Around 15% to 30% of people infected with syphilis who don't get treated will develop complications known as tertiary syphilis. Later stages of the disease may cause damage to brain, nerves, bones and joints. These problems may occur several years after the primary untreated infection. A 56-year-old male patient came with complaints of purulent discharge from nose and nasal regurgitation of food for the past 6 months. On examination a 4x3 cm circular perforation was noted on the mid palate. Blood

investigations revealed a positive reactive Venereal Disease Research Laboratory (VDRL) test. Dark field microscopy was done which revealed characteristic cork-screw shaped *Treponema pallidum* organisms, that confirmed the diagnosis of syphilis. The patient was advised palatal obturator and

antibiotics, but the patient did not follow up owing to financial reasons. Palatal perforation secondary to syphilis is uncommon with recent advances in antibiotic therapy.



Figure 1: circular perforation of size 4x3 cm over the mid palate