



HAIR DISORDERS

AN UNDETECTED CASE OF TINEA CAPITIS IN AN ELDERLY WOMAN AFFECTED BY DERMATOMYOSITIS: HOW TRICHOSCOPY CAN GUIDES TO THE RIGHT DIAGNOSIS

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Background: Dermatomyositis (DM) is an autoimmune disease that primarily affects the skin and the muscles but may also have a systemic involvement. The frequency of scalp involvement in DM varies from 28 to 82% and recurrently it is encountered as part of a DM flare. It often presents as a treatment-resistant disease however, when patient reports no improvement with conventional therapies, requires further investigation.

Observation: A 79-year-old woman affected by dermatomyositis was referred to us for the occurrence of a diffuse alopecia with scalp itching. She had a reactivation of the disease at the time of the visit and underwent to therapy with methotrexate and topical steroid that showed improved cutaneous symptoms but without scalp improvement. Clinically the scalp presents many erythematous and scaly plaques with erythema and atrophy, typical of dermatomyositis. Pilotraction was positive, in vertex zone. Trichoscopy showed enlarged, tortuous and arborized vessels and in addition revealed a considerable number of “comma”, “zigzag” and “pigtail” hairs, with fine perifollicular scaling that suggests a simultaneous Tinea capitis (TC). An accurate anamnesis revealed that the women lived in the country in close contact with farm animals, so in the presence of defined trichoscopic features of TC we decided to perform a potassium hydroxide preparation that actually demonstrated abundant hyphae and spores invading hair shafts, and confirmed the diagnosis. Findings from a fungal culture of scalp scrapings identified *Microsporum Canis*. The patient was treated with oral griseofulvin 1 gr for 12 weeks. After eight weeks of treatment, itch was reduced, alopecia was improved, and trichoscopy revealed the complete absence of modified hairs.

Key message: This case is relevant because it suggests that trichoscopy represents an important, non-invasive technique for the evaluation of patients with hair loss and may be an immediate, cost-effective way to guide to the right diagnosis and therapy.

