



INFECTIOUS DISEASES (BACTERIAL, FUNGAL, VIRAL, PARASITIC, INFESTATIONS)

IMAGES IN DERMATOLOGY: DIAGNOSTIC METHODS OF SCABIES

N Scabine Pessotti⁽¹⁾ - *J Verrinder Veasey*⁽¹⁾

Irmandade Da Santa Casa De Misericórdia De São Paulo, Dermatology, São Paulo, Brazil⁽¹⁾

Background: Scabies is a contagious cutaneous infection caused by the penetration of the mite *Sarcoptes scabiei* in the epidermis. Clinically, it is characterized by pruritic erythematous papulovesicular lesions. The definitive diagnosis is based on the identification of the mites, eggs or fecal elements.

Observation: The identification of the mite and its elements can be achieved by analysis of skin samples or direct examination of the skin with dermoscopy. The skin samples are put under analysis with the use of light microscopy, and can be obtained by two procedures: cutaneous scrapings collected with a scalpel blade and placed on a glass slide (Figure 1), or collection performed by placing a piece of duct tape on the skin, slowly removing and pasting it into the microscope slides (Figure 2). Another possibility is the use of dermoscopy for direct visualization of the mite, identified by a triangular structure which corresponds to the head and the two pairs of anterior limbs (Figure 3), as well as indirect elements of the mite's presence, with the identification of tunnel structures that correspond to the path traveled by the agent in its moment of parasitism (Figure 4). The identification of the tunnel also helps the search for the mite, since it is usually at the end of this structure that we find the *Sarcoptes scabiei* more frequently. The analysis of skin samples by light microscope is considered the exam of choice when available to the dermatologist. The use of the dermoscope has shown to be an interesting alternative, allowing both direct and indirect identification of the mite, which even in inexperienced hands presents an acceptable diagnostic sensitivity and specificity.

Key message: Illustration of the the diagnostic aspects of scabies, facilitating the therapeutic decision for a highly contagious disease, where delayed treatment can result in epidemic outbreaks and economic burden.

