

Images in Clinical Practice

Phlyctenular Conjunctivitis

A 12-year-old girl had irritation and redness in both eyes (associated with watering) for one week duration. There was no history of trauma to the eyes. On examination, bilateral extensive phlyctenular conjunctivitis involving both cornea and conjunctiva (*Fig. 1*) and extensive erythema nodosum on the pre-tibial surface of both legs were present. X-ray chest was normal, tuberculin test was strongly positive (35 x 25 mm). Her cutaneous and ocular lesions resolved rapidly within 10 days after starting anti tubercular treatment.

Conjunctival phlycten is a small pinkish white elevated nodule situated in the midst of a hyperemic area. Apart from the surrounding zone of hyperemia, the rest of the conjunctiva remains clear. Most often the nodule is on the limbus and a leash of

blood vessels are found running from it in a triangular fashion.

Phlyctenular conjunctivitis is a type IV hypersensitivity reaction in the cornea and conjunctiva to a foreign antigen. The most common associations include staphylococcal antigens, tuberculosis, fungal antigens, certain irritant chemicals, gonococcal antigens, lymphogranuloma venereum, adenovirus and leishmaniasis.

The differential diagnosis include rosacea, infective ulcer in the cornea and bulbar form of vernal catarrh.

C.R. Banapurmath,
Aji Varghese,
M.B. Koujalgi,
Department of Pediatrics
J.J.M. Medical College,
Davangere 577 004,
Karnataka.



Fig. 1. Photograph showing multiple pinkish white elevated nodules on bulbar conjunctiva, situated on hyperemic areas, while the remaining conjunctiva is clear.