



ART IN DERMATOLOGY

## PARALLELISM BETWEEN LIPS ARTISTIC REPRESENTATIONS AND PLASMA CELL CHEILITIS

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**Background:** Beauty ideals and aesthetic standards vary across eras and cultures. As well as being one of the key aesthetic units of the face, lips play a significant role in phonation and swallowing. In addition, the lips contribute substantially to facial expressions. Christo, a Bulgarian artist based in Basel, created an unusual series of pencil drawings that transform the texture of lips into trees, the aerial layout of a city, and even other human forms. We reported a rare case of plasma cell cheilitis (PCC) in a middle-aged Yemenite male patient linked to tobacco leaf chewing habit.

**Observation:** A middle-aged Yemenite male patient complained about multiple chronic lips lesions. Erythema and swelling of the gingiva as well as multiple papillomatous lesions disseminated on the lips have been observed. The lesions appeared after a long-term chewing habit of tobacco leaf. The pathological examination showed irregular acanthosis, and parakeratosis; lamina propria showed moderate perivascular lymphoplasmacytic cell infiltrate rich in plasma cells, with multiple Russell's bodies and Mott's cells. No evidence of dysplasia or malignancy has been seen at the levels examined. Therefore, a diagnosis of PCC was made. PCC is a rare inflammatory disease. It belongs to plasma cell mucositis, which involves the mucous membrane of the oral cavity and upper aerodigestive tract. The pathogenesis of PCC is not clear. However, it has been thought that type IV hypersensitivity could play a crucial role. The lesions improved with the application of topical corticosteroids and withdrawal of the tobacco leaf. Only three cases of PCC due to chewing have been reported.

**Key message:** The clinical features of our patient resemble Christo's drawings of lips. The lips were diverted in a very subtle way by the artist, merging them with drawings of forest, map, and even human body.

