

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

## ONCHOCERCIASIS - A NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASE STILL WITHIN AND AROUND US: CASE REPORT FROM MAKURDI, NORTH-CENTRAL NIGERIA

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**BACKGROUND:** Onchocerciasis is a parasitic disease caused by the filarial worm *Onchocerca volvulus*. The disease is one of the Neglected Tropical Diseases which causes various cutaneous and extra-cutaneous disorders and creates a heavy burden on the sufferers. There is ongoing transmission of the disease despite all efforts at elimination mostly in rural communities. Hence, the need to report this case of chronic onchocerciasis in a farmer who was further stigmatized in his community. Therefore, all efforts at elimination of the disease should be intensified.

**OBSERVATION:** We report a case of a 60 year old male farmer who was referred to the Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi on account of severe pruritus and generalized skin eruptions for 10 years.

The eruptions were initially at both the upper and lower extremities before spreading to the trunk with sparing of the face. The initial eruptions were said to be erythematous and pruritic which makes the patient to scratch the lesions with progressive worsening of the symptoms.

He was very fond of taking his bath and swimming in the fast flowing rivers close to his farmlands since he was a teenager. There was no history of similar rash in any of his occupational colleagues or family members. He was also being stigmatized by his family and friends who were scared that they would be infected by making physical contact with him. Physical examination done revealed generalized fresh and healed papules with areas of post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation, onchocercal nodules and hanging groin.

Microscopy of a skin snip taken from the iliac crest revealed microfilariae.

**KEY MESSAGE:** There is still ongoing transmission of onchocerciasis in Sub-saharan Africa and all efforts at elimination should be improved.