



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

THE DISNEY MASQUERADE: TALAROMYCES MARNEFFEI

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Background: *Talaromyces marneffe*i (formerly *Penicillium marneffe*i) is a dimorphic fungus that causes a systemic fungal infection referred to as *Talaromycosis*. It is an important cause of morbidity and mortality in HIV infected and other immunosuppressed patients who live in or are from endemic areas. *Talaromyces* is endemic to most South Asia, North-eastern India, Southern China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Although the mode of transmission of *Talaromyces marneffe*i is unknown, an airborne route via inhalation of conidia from an environmental reservoir is suspected.

Observation: We report the case of a 35-year-old South African female who frequently travelled to the far east, to the city of Hong Kong for her occupation, returning every six months to South Africa. She presented with a 2-month history of generalised, ulcerated papules, plaques and nodules. The clinical presentation was that of a deep fungal infection such as histoplasmosis and *Cryptococcosis* however on microscopy, yeast like bodies were observed and *Talaromyces marneffe*i was cultured.

Key message: To date there has been only 1 other documented case in South Africa highlighting this rare disease. This report will focus on its rarity, associations, therapies and to communicate the importance of travel history and early diagnosis. The correlation of clinical findings with histopathology and microbiology is essential for the management of this disease.

