

Swelling on the inner aspect of the lower lip

Mohamad I, Muhamed NA, Abdul Hamid SS

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Authors:

Irfan Mohamad

(Corresponding author)
MD, M.Med (ORL-HNS)
Department of Otorhinolaryngology-
Head & Neck Surgery, School of
Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains
Malaysia Health Campus, 16150
Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia
Email : irfankb@usm.my

Nik Azrizie Muhamed

MD
Department of Otorhinolaryngology-
Head & Neck Surgery, School of
Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains
Malaysia Health Campus, 16150
Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia
Email: nikazrizie@yahoo.com

Suzina Sheikh Abdul Hamid

MBBS, M.Med (ORL-HNS)
Department of Radiology,
School of Medical Sciences,
Universiti Sains Malaysia Health
Campus, Kelantan, Malaysia
Email: suzina@usm.my

Case summary

A 14-year-old man presented with 1-month history of swelling on the inner aspect of his lower lip. The swelling was painless; however, it disturbed his speech. There was no contact bleeding but had a positive history of habitual lip biting. Examination showed a single $0.5 \times 1 \text{ cm}^2$ soft oval-shaped swelling with well-circumscribed margin (Figures 1 and 2). On palpation, the mass was non-tender and had a cystic or fluctuant sensation.



Figure 1. Anterior view of the mass



Figure 2. Lateral view of the mass

Questions

1. What is the diagnosis?
2. What is the pathogenesis of this condition?
3. Outline the treatment.

Answers

1. It is a lip mucocele (minor salivary gland retention cyst). Other than the lower lip, common sites of occurrence include the tongue, floor of the mouth and buccal mucosa.¹
2. It is an accumulation of saliva. In the oral mucosa, there are plenty of minor salivary glands including the inner aspect of the lips. Each gland has its own duct draining into the oral cavity. For one reason or another, if the path of salivary flow is obstructed,¹ the saliva gets accumulated with time and forms a small painless cystic swelling. The duct of the minor glands can be damaged by an episode of infection, presence of stone, stricture or post-trauma. Lip biting is one of the common causes of trauma.
3. Sometimes the lesion may rupture and disappear or appear to change its size with time. A relatively larger cyst may warrant its removal. The patient chose to have his lesion removed under local anesthesia because he had difficulty in speaking with the lesion. Surgical excision is the best choice to provide adequate biopsy material and preferably the entire lesion is removed for histological examination.² Rare tumour mimicking lip mucocele has been reported.³ In this case, the patient was seen in the clinic 2 weeks post-procedure. The site healed well. There was no sign of residual mass. The histopathological report confirmed the diagnosis of mucocele.

References

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