

Bilateral Phthiriasis Palpebrarum Treated with Petrolatum Jelly and Tea Tree Oil

**Kalogera E., Tsarouchi D., Roussos A., Spanos E., Papadopoulos N.,
Konstantopoulou K., Peponis V.**

1ST Ophthalmology Department, Ophthalmiatreio Eye Hospital of Athens, Greece



ΟΦΘΑΛΜΙΑΤΡΕΙΟ
ΑΘΗΝΩΝ
Έτος ιδρύσεως 1843

PURPOSE

To present a gentle therapeutic approach for phthiriasis palpebrarum.

CASE PRESENTATION

A 61 year-old female patient was presented to the Emergency Department complaining about itching of both her eyelids for two weeks. Her initial diagnosis was blepharitis and she has been treated accordingly by another ophthalmologist.

CLINICAL FINDINGS

- Serious localized erythema over both her eyelids, causing bleeding.
- Moving lice hanging from the eyelashes (appx. 5/eyelid) and multiple nits (Fig. 1)

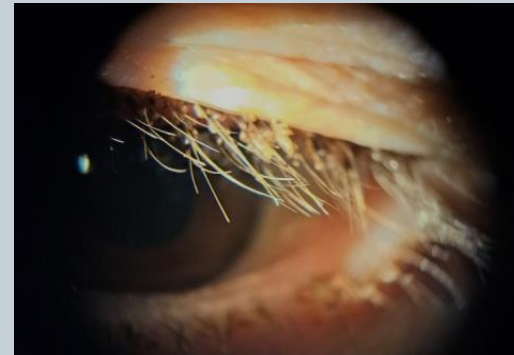


Fig 1 : Slit lamp photograph at presentation.

Therapeutic approach



ΟΦΘΑΛΜΙΑΤΡΕΙΟ
ΑΘΗΝΩΝ
Έτος ιδρύσεως 1843

- Removal of most of the living insects manually with fine forceps.
- Use of tobramycin 0.3% ointment and warm cotton pads three times daily for seven days.
- Venereological consultation and information of her sexual partners, concerning that phthiriasis palpebrarum is caused by Pthirus Pubis and infestation occurs mainly through sexual intercourse¹.
- Instructions for washing and heat dry of clothing and bed linen to avoid re-infestation.

After initial treatment, there were no lice presented, however nits were not reduced in number. (Fig 2,3). Thus, treatment was modified to the use of the following twice daily :

- Petrolatum jelly locally.
- Good hygiene of the eyelids, using cleansing foam containing tea tree oil 5%.

Patient was followed-up once every 15 days for 2 months, until all nits disappeared.

CONCLUSION

Treatment of phthiriasis palpebrarum is difficult and varied. Several physical and chemical therapeutic modalities can be applied. Most drugs used in the treatment can cause ocular toxic effects². In the presenting case, bilateral phthiriasis palpebrum was successfully treated with mild substances, mainly using petrolatum jelly and tea tree oil.

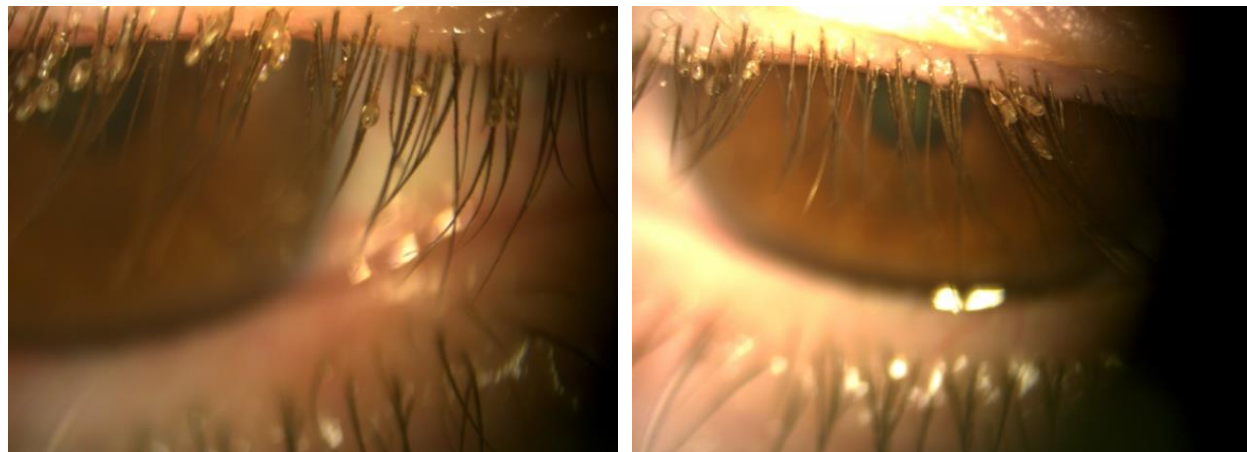


Fig 2,3: Multiple nits appearing simultaneously on right eye and left eye respectively.

References

1. Gurnani B, Badri T, Hafsi W. Phthiriasis Palpebrarum. [Updated 2023 Jun 11]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2024 Jan-. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK459226/>
2. Anane, S., Malek, I., Kamoun, R., & Chtourou, O. (2013). Phthiriasis palpebrarum: Diagnosis and treatment. *Journal Français d'Ophtalmologie*, 36(10), 815–819. doi:10.1016/ j.jfo.2013.03.018 10.1016/j.jfo.2013.03.018



ΟΦΘΑΛΜΙΑΤΡΕΙΟ
ΑΘΗΝΩΝ

Έτος ίδρύσεως 1843