Squamous Cell Papilloma: The Importance of Oral Cavity Examination

Papiloma de Células Escamosas: A Importância do Exame da Cavidade Oral

Ana Sofia Rodrigues, Jéssica Santos

Autor Correspondente/Corresponding Author:
Ana Sofia Rodrigues [a.sofiarodrigues13@gmail.com]
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0862-4072
Medicina Geral e Familiar, Unidade de Saúde Familiar Nova Via, Unidade Local de Saúde Gaia e Espinho, Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal
Rua Boa Nova 325, Valadares, 4405-535

DOI: https://doi.org/10.29315/gm.1050

KEYWORDS: Mouth Diseases; Papillomaviridae; Papillomavirus Infections

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Doenças da Boca; Infecções por Papillomavirus; Papillomaviridae

A 58-year-old female patient with a history of a cervical cytology result showing atypical squamous cells of undetermined significance (ASC-US) with positive HPV-51 in 2021, who is being followed up at the Gynecology. During a surveillance consultation in March 2023, she reported the appearance of a painless lesion on the oral mucosa that had been present for about one month. Upon examination of the oral cavity, a verrucous lesion approximately 3 mm in size was detected on the right side of the palate. She was referred to the maxillofacial surgery, where an excisional biopsy of the lesion was performed, showing morphological aspects compatible with squamous papilloma.

Squamous cell papilloma of the oral cavity is a relatively common benign epithelial lesion affecting the oral mucosa.[1,2] In most cases, it is asymptomatic; however, in certain situations, it may cause discomfort depending on its location and size.[2,3] These lesions are most frequently observed between the second and fourth decades of life. Squamous cell papilloma of the oral cavity is associated with infection by the human papillomavirus (HPV), particularly subtypes 6 and 11.[4,5] Evidence indicates that cervical HPV positivity may increase the likelihood of detecting the virus in the oral cavity, which raises the hypothesis of cross-site transmission. Such transmission may occur through oral–genital sexual practices or by self-inoculation, highlighting that HPV should not be regarded as confined to a single anatomical site. Instead, it appears to circulate across mucosal surfaces, with potential implications for persistence and disease development. A recent meta-analysis demonstrated that oral HPV infection is more common among women with concurrent cervical infection, reinforcing the value of integrated approaches to screening and prevention.[6]

Although malignant transformation is rare, it can occur. The site and size of the papilloma may serve as risk factors for malignant transformation. While any

Medicina Geral e Familiar, Unidade de Saúde Familiar Nova Via, Unidade Local de Saúde Gaia e Espinho, Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal

Recebido/Received: 2025-05-09. Aceite/Accepted: 2025-10-15. Publicado online/Published online: 2026-04-10

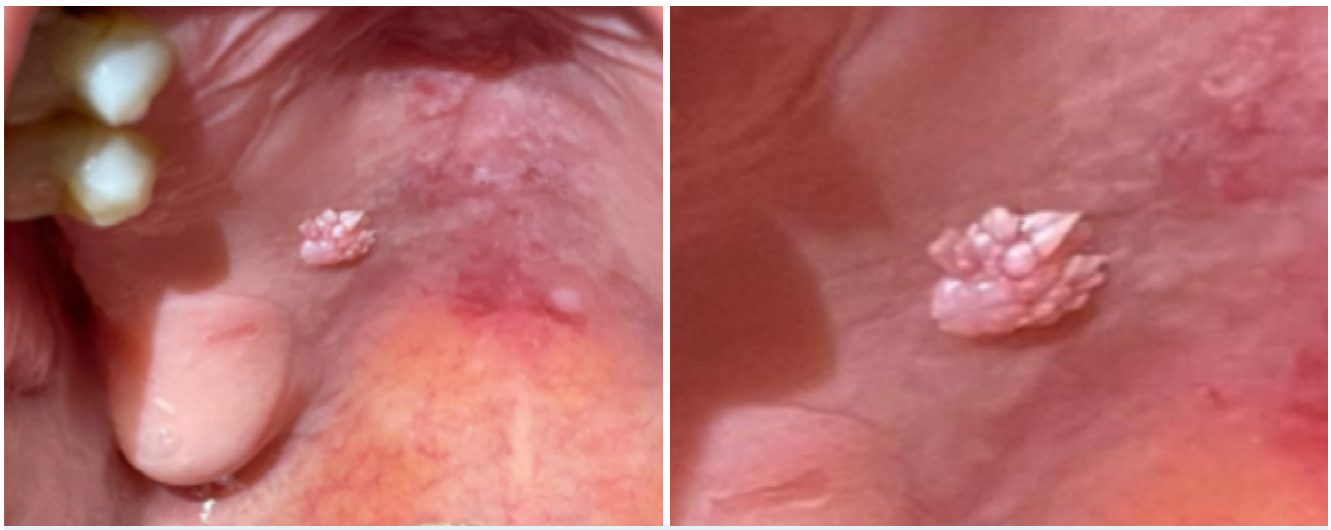

FIGURE 1. Nodular, pedunculated lesion, measuring approximately 3x3 cm on the palate on the right

location within the oral cavity can be affected, lesions situated in the gingival region are generally associated with a higher risk. Additionally, lesions measuring more than 10 mm in diameter are also considered to carry an increased risk of malignancy.[2,7] Despite the characteristic presentation—pedunculated, whitish/reddish, and solitary lesion with exophytic growth—excisional biopsy is important to rule out other differential diagnoses, namely precursor lesions of oral carcinoma.[1,4,5] Therefore, a thorough examination of the oral cavity is essential.

DECLARAÇÃO DE CONTRIBUIÇÃO /CONTRIBUTORSHIP STATEMENT

ASR, JS - Conceção, pesquisa, redação, revisão e aprovação do artigo final.

Todos os autores aprovaram a versão final a ser publicada

ASR, JS - Conception, research, writing, review and approval of the final article.

All authors approved the final version to be published.

RESPONSABILIDADES ÉTICAS

CONFLITOS DE INTERESSE: Os autores declaram a inexistência de conflitos de interesse na realização do presente trabalho.

FONTES DE FINANCIAMENTO: Não existiram fontes externas de financiamento para a realização deste artigo.

CONFIDENCIALIDADE DOS DADOS: Os autores declaram ter seguido os protocolos da sua instituição acerca da publicação dos dados de doentes.

CONSENTIMENTO: Consentimento do doente para publicação obtido.

PROVENIÊNCIA E REVISÃO POR PARES: Não comissionado; revisão externa por pares.

ETHICAL DISCLOSURES

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: This work has not received any contribution, grant or scholarship.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA: The authors declare that they have followed the protocols of their work center on the publication of patient data.

PATIENT CONSENT: Consent for publication was obtained.

PROVENANCE AND PEER REVIEW: Not commissioned; externally peer-reviewed

REFERENCES

1. Betz SJ. HPV-related papillary lesions of the oral mucosa: a review. Head Neck Pathol. 2019;13:80-90. doi: 10.1007/s12105-019-01003-7.
2. Martín J, Alvarado P, Rodríguez PR, Fabricio M, Carrasco L, Vazquez VR, et al. Squamous papilloma in the oral cavity: case presentation and review of the literature. J Dent Heal Oral Disord Ther. 2018;9:257–60.
3. Darwish G. Squamous papilloma of the soft palate: a case report. Cureus. 2023;15:e37423. doi: 10.7759/cureus.37423.
4. Jaju PP, Suvarna PV, Desai RS. Squamous papilloma: case report and review of literature. Int J Oral Sci. 2010;2:222-5. doi: 10.4248/IJOS10065.
5. K SK, Premlal KR, Sivaramakrishnan M, Aroumougam A. Oral Squamous Papilloma. J Sci Dent. 2017;11:46–9.
6. Mózes AE, Olasz FH, Martineková P, Kiss-Dala S, Bródy A, Végh D, et al. Cervical HPV Positivity Elevates the Risk for Oral HPV Infection: A Systematic Review with Meta-Analysis. J Dent Res. 2025;104:1181-1191. doi: 10.1177/00220345251337071.
7. Andrade SA, Pratavieira S, Paes JF, Ribeiro MM, Bagnato VS, Varotti FP. Oral squamous papilloma: a view under clinical, fluorescence and histopathological aspects. Einstein. 2019;17:eRC4624. doi: 10.31744/einstein_journal/2019RC4624.