

CLINICAL IMAGE

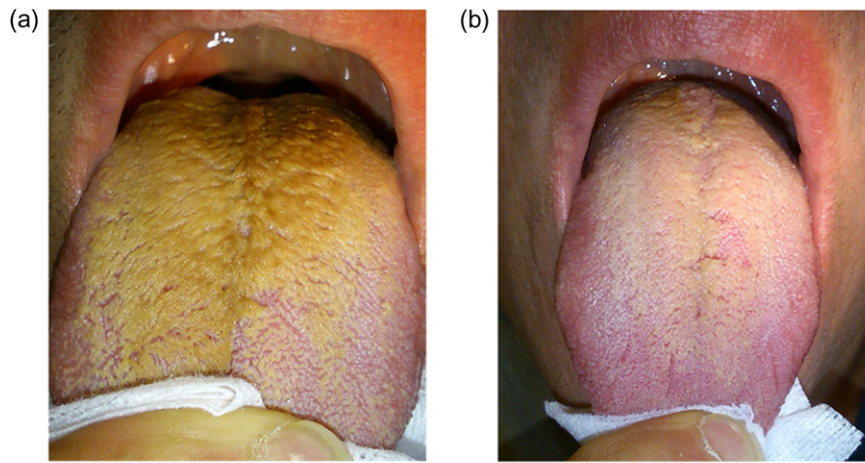
Linezolid-induced hairy tongue

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A 52-year-old male, presented with a 3-week history of hairy tongue feeling, dark discoloration, xerostomia and dysgeusia

(Fig. 1a). The symptoms started during a 10-week treatment with Linezolid for post-knee arthroplasty complicated with



Are there previous conclusive reports on this reaction?	+1 (Yes)
Did the adverse event occur after the suspected drug was administered?	+2 (Yes)
Did the adverse reaction improve when the drug was discontinued or a specific antagonist was administered?	+1 (Yes)
Did the adverse reaction reappear when the drug was readministered?	0 (Not known)
Are there alternative causes (other than the drug) that could have on their own caused the reaction?	+2 (No)
Did the reaction reappear when a placebo was given?	0 (Not known)
Was the blood detected in the blood (or other fluids) in concentrations known to be toxic?	0 (No)
Was the reaction more severe when the dose was increased or less severe when the dose was decreased?	+1 (Yes)
Did the patient have a similar reaction to the same or similar drugs in any previous exposure?	0 (Not known)
Was the adverse event confirmed by any objective evidence?	0 (No)
TOTAL SCORE	7

Figure 1: (a) Hairy tongue during linezolid treatment; (b) Normal tongue 3 weeks after discontinuing Linezolid; (c) Results of the Naranjo Adverse Drug Reaction Probability Scale.

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Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* infection. Hairy tongue consists of a benign condition related to abnormal keratin build-up in filiform papillae, giving them an elongated hair-like appearance. This defective desquamation prevents normal debridement of the filiform papillae that then collect debris, bacteria, fungi or other foreign materials, worsening the discoloration. Such finding is an uncommon adverse reaction of Linezolid therapy, more likely when long antibiotic treatment is followed [1].

The Naranjo's Adverse Drug Reaction (ADR) Probability Scale (Fig. 1c) resulted in a score of 7 (0–10), which according to the authors, corresponds to a probable ADR [2]. Other known causes of dark hairy tongue such as poor oral hygiene, smoking, alcohol or substance abuse were ruled out. Three weeks after discontinuing Linezolid, all tongue symptoms had improved and only a light yellow discoloration remained, which eventually disappeared (Fig. 1b).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

None declared.

FUNDING

None.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

None required.

CONSENT

The study participant provided informed written consent prior to the submission.

GUARANTOR

J.B.S. is a guarantor of the study.

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2. Naranjo CA, Busto U, Sellers EM, Sandor P, Ruiz I, Roberts EA, et al. A method for estimating the probability of adverse drug reactions. *Clin Pharmacol Ther* 1981;30:239–45.