Photo Quiz: A 36-Year-Old with Recurrent Conjunctivitis

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Journal Title: Journal of Clinical Microbiology
Volume: Volume 50, Number 2
Publisher: American Society for Microbiology | 2012-02, Pages 215-215
Type of Work: Article | Final Publisher PDF
Publisher DOI: 10.1128/JCM.06019-11
Permanent URL: http://pid.emory.edu/ark:/25593/cws43

Final published version: http://dx.doi.org/10.1128%2FJCM.06019-11

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Accessed November 12, 2019 9:22 PM EST
A 36-year-old man presented to our outpatient clinic with a sudden onset of opaque yellow-green discharge and redness in both eyes, with the left eye more involved than the right. On examination, the patient also had a small amount of similar discharge from his left medial tear duct. His visual acuity was not affected, and there was no pain associated with the symptoms. The patient does not wear contact lenses or glasses. The symptoms were exacerbated by a lack of sleep due to a newborn 2-week-old son and a 2-year-old daughter at home. The patient had experienced these symptoms before, and this was his fourth episode in about 3 months. In the previous episodes, moxifloxacin ophthalmic drops relieved the symptoms but sulfacetamide ophthalmic drops did not.

A small amount of the purulent material was submitted for culture. After overnight incubation, a few mucoid, gray-white colonies were seen on sheep blood agar. Similar growth was seen on chocolate agar and MacConkey agar (a non-lactose fermenter). A Gram stain from colonies growing on the blood agar plate showed Gram-negative cocci with darker staining in the periphery, giving the organism a vacuolated appearance (Fig. 1). The organism was catalase positive, oxidase positive, and nonmotile. A presumptive identification was based on these characteristics. Definitive identification using biochemical reactions and cell wall fatty acid analysis was subsequently performed by the Georgia Department of Human Resources.

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doi:10.1128/JCM.06021-11

Fig. 1 Gram stain of colonies from a blood agar plate. Magnification, ×1,000 (oil).