

**MALASSEZIAL DERMATITIS IN A GUINEA PIG – A CASE REPORT**

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**Received 31-8-2015****Accepted 28-1-2016**

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*Malasseziapachy dermatis* is a commensal, lipophilic basidiomycetes yeast of ovoid or ellipsoidal shape with a thick wall, without production of pseudo mycellium (David *et al.*, 2003). It is commonly found on the skin of dogs and around 50% of clinically healthy dogs are carriers of this yeast (Patterson and Frank, 2002). *Malassezia* has been very rarely recovered from rodents or lagomorph species (Vega and Castella, 2011). Alterations of cutaneous microclimate and host defence mechanisms allow organisms to multiply and become pathogenic. The present paper describes a case of malassezias dermatitis in a guinea pig and its successful treatment with topical application of miconazole.

**CASE HISTORY AND OBSERVATIONS**

A two month old guinea-pig which was kept as a pet was presented to University Veterinary Hospital, Mannuthy with the complaint of hair loss from the limbs. Detailed clinical examination revealed localised alopecia on all limbs with dry scales. The hair coat was dry and animal also showed itching. Skin scrapings were collected aseptically from the affected area and were subjected to direct microscopic examination and fungal culture in Sabouraud's dextrose agar with chloramphenicol at 37°C and isolates obtained were identified. Impression smears from the lesions were stained with Leishman stain and subjected to microscopic examination.

**DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT AND DISCUSSION**

On direct microscopic examination, no fungal spores or parasites could be detected. Impression smears from the lesions revealed budding yeast cells suggestive of *Malassezia*. Inoculation of skin scrapings in Sabouraud's dextrose agar with 0.05% chloramphenicol and incubation at 37°C for 48 hours yielded creamy white round domed colonies with lobed margins which were identified as *M. Pachydermatis* by demonstration of gram positive budding yeast cells in gram stained smears and positive results in biochemical tests like urease and catalase. Vega and Castella (2011) reported the presence of *Malassezia* spp in rabbits but there were no reports on natural infection of guinea pigs.



Fig 1. Localised lesions on limbs of Guinea pig



Fig 2. Creamy white domed colony with lobed margins

Animal was treated with topical application of miconazole gel for 15 days and supportive treatment with vitamins (verol drops) and animal showed significant clinical recovery.

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