

## Gingival overgrowth secondary to amlodipine

A 66-year-old Asian woman attended for optimization of blood pressure control. Prescribed medication included atenolol (50 mg once daily), bendrofluazide (2.5 mg once daily) and amlodipine (5 mg once daily). She complained of gingival overgrowth, occurring several months after starting amlodipine (Figure 1).

Most physicians have seen gingival overgrowth with either phenytoin or ciclosporin. Fewer clinicians may be aware of this side effect with potentially all the calcium-channel blockers. Overgrowth can be disfiguring, painful and may result in bleeding and infection. While the exact mecha-

nism remains unknown there is an increase in the collagen fibres and non-collagenous proteins in the connective tissue. It is described as being three times more common in men and there is a hierarchy among the more commonly prescribed drugs in this class, with nifedipine being the most likely and diltiazem and verapamil the least likely to cause overgrowth (Ellis et al, 1999). The British National

**Figure 1. Generalized, firm overgrowth of the mandibular gingiva. This patient had already undergone surgical debridement with recurrence of the overgrowth.**



Formulary describes this as an extremely rare side effect of taking amlodipine. The authors have only encountered two such patients within their cardiology service over the last 10 years in a busy west London hospital; both were related to amlodipine. In susceptible patients onset may be rapid, with one case describing onset only 2 months after starting a daily dose of amlodipine 10 mg (Lafzi et al, 2006).

Transplant physicians should be particularly cautious of this side effect in patients who may be taking a combination of ciclosporin and calcium-channel blockers.

Treatment involves withdrawing the drug, oral surgical referral for excision of overgrowth and a concentrated oral hygiene programme. **BJHM**

Ellis JS, Seymour RA, Steele JG, Robertson P, Butler TJ, Thomason JM (1999) Prevalence of gingival overgrowth induced by calcium channel blockers: a community-based study. *J Periodontol* **70**(1): 63–7

Lafzi A, Farahani RM, Shoja MA (2006) Amlodipine-induced gingival hyperplasia. *Med Oral Patol Oral Cir Bucal* **11**(6): E480–482

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