

# *Dermoscopic diagnosis of pediculosis capitis*

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## KEY WORDS

pediculosis, scalp, dermoscopy, ectoparasitosis, diagnosis

### *Case report*

A 4-year-old girl presented to our dermatology department because of a 2-week history of itchy scalp. Cutaneous examination revealed pseudo-dandruff and scratch marks extending to the neck and retro-auricular folds.

Dermoscopic examination of some affected hairs showed grey, translucent, ovoid eggs with flattened free ends firmly attached to the hair shaft, corresponding to nits (Fig. 1). A diagnosis of pediculosis capitis was made and treatment with lindane powder was initiated, leading to clinical remission.

Head lice infestation, or pediculosis capitis, caused by *Pediculus humanus capitis*, is a common health concern. Scalp pruritus is the cardinal symptom. Diagnosis is based upon the detection of lice or nits. However, because the louse moves quickly and avoids light, it is often invisible to the naked eye. Dermoscopy is a precise and noninvasive technique that may be an aid in the diagnosis of pediculosis capitis when ovoid bodies containing nymphs are present, corresponding to viable nits and attesting a recent infestation.

Dermoscopy has also been used in the diagnosis of other human parasitoses such as scabies (1), pediculosis capitis (2), and pubic phthiriasis (3). In difficult cases, it helps to differentiate between pediculosis capitis

and seborrheic dermatitis of the scalp. Dermoscopy is also a repetitive technique that aids in follow-up examinations (2).



**Figure 1. Dermoscopy: gray, translucent, ovoid eggs, firmly attached to the hair shaft, corresponding to nits.**

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