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► To cite this version:

Vincent Bérot, Ahmed-Fateh Ousser, Wladimir Sougakoff, Gabriel Lecso, Gentiane Monsel, et al.. A patient from Mali with *Actinomyces* bangladeshensis-induced foot mycetoma: A diagnostic challenge. *Travel Medicine and Infectious Disease*, 2019, 31, pp.101452. 10.1016/j.tmaid.2019.07.008 . hal-03127561

HAL Id: hal-03127561

<https://hal.science/hal-03127561v1>

Submitted on 20 Jul 2022

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A patient from Mali with *Actinomadura bangladeshensis*-induced foot mycetoma: a diagnostic challenge

Vincent Bérot¹, Ahmed-Fateh Ousser², Wladimir Sougakoff^{2,3}, Gabriel Lecso⁴, Gentiane Monsel¹, Eric Caumes^{1,5}

¹Infectious and Tropical Diseases Department, Pitié-Salpêtrière University Hospital, AP-HP, Paris, France

²Bacteriology Department, Pitié-Salpêtrière University Hospital, AP-HP, Paris, France

³Centre d'Immunologie et des Maladies Infectieuses (Cimi-Paris) INSERM UMRS 1135 - CNRS ERL 8255

⁴Myco-parasitology Department, Pitié-Salpêtrière University Hospital, AP-HP, Paris, France

⁵Faculty of Medicine, Sorbonne-Université, Paris, France

Disclosure: no conflict of interest

Corresponding author: Vincent Bérot, Infectious and Tropical Diseases Department, Pitié-Salpêtrière University Hospital, AP-HP, 47-83 boulevard de l'Hôpital, 75013 Paris, France.
vincent.berot@aphp.fr

Word count: 292

Tables: 0

Figures: 1

Key-words

Actinomycetoma

Actinomadura bangladeshensis

Text

A 51-year-old man from Mali, living in France since 1990 and travelling yearly to Kayes area in Southwestern Mali, presented in July 2018 with a painless left-foot firm swelling (Fig. 1A) of 8-year duration. Foot skin was covered by deep fistulas. Diagnosis of actinomycetoma was confirmed by identifying in the pus discharged from fistulas white grains (Fig. 1B) containing filamentous branched and ramified Gram-positive bacilli (Fig. 1C, Gram staining, 100-fold magnification). Bacilli were identified by 16S rRNA gene sequencing as *Actinomadura bangladeshensis* (99.2% nucleotide identity over 493 bp in the GenBank database, strain 3-46-b(3), NCBI Reference Sequence NR_041618.1). Culture returned positive after 22 days but due to low inoculum and slow growth speed of these bacteria, no *in vitro* susceptibility testing was possible.

X-Ray and MRI showed cortical erosions on first metatarsal and navicular bones (Fig. 1D).

Treatment with trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole was started and is still pursued for at least one year with possibility of amputation in case of failure.

Mycetoma is a chronic soft tissue infection that creates sinusoidal cavities, fistulized to the skin and producing grains. Grains correspond to the aggregation of filamentous pathogens surrounded by biofilm, either bacteria in actinomycetomas or fungi in eumycetomas. Grain colour may orient towards fungal or bacterial origin. Mycetomas remain endemic in tropical countries and are considered by WHO as a neglected tropical disease. They are sporadic in developed countries and reported almost only in migrants from countries between 30th northern and 15th southern parallels, also known as “Mycetoma Belt”. However, this term should no more be used because mycetomas are described elsewhere as in Southern Europe.

Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole is the standard treatment for actinomycetomas as in our case with overall response rate around 60 to 70 % according to the involved species and the authors.

