Angina Bullosa Hemorrhagica

Author: Roman Carlos, DDS; Chief Editor: Dirk M Elston, MD  more...

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Background

Angina bullosa hemorrhagica (ABH) is the term used to describe acute, benign, and generally subepithelial oral mucosal blisters filled with blood that are not attributable to a systemic disorder or hemostatic defect.

This condition was first described in 1933 as traumatic oral hemophlyctenosis. Badham first used the currently accepted term angina bullosa hemorrhagica in 1967.

The lesions may be confused with other more serious disorders (eg, mucous membrane pemphigoid, epidermolysis bullosa, linear IgA, dermatitis herpetiformis); however, the isolated nature, rapid healing, and rare recurrence of angina bullosa hemorrhagica blisters generally are sufficient findings to rule out the previously mentioned conditions.

The lesions of angina bullosa hemorrhagica may be indistinguishable from blood blisters related to thrombocytopenia; however, blood tests and the absence of areas of ecchymosis, epistaxis, or gingival bleeding are helpful signs to rule it out.

Some authors suggest mild trauma as the causative agent in angina bullosa hemorrhagica to break the epithelial–connective-tissue junction, causing bleeding of superficial capillaries and resulting in the formation of a subepithelial hemorrhagic bullae.

Also see the Medscape Reference articles Bullous Pemphigoid, Epidermolysis Bullosa, Linear IgA Dermatosis, and Dermatitis Herpetiformis.

Epidemiology

Mortality/Morbidity

Angina bullosa hemorrhagica is a benign condition; however, some authors have reported acute upper airway obstruction associated with rapidly enlarging bulla of the posterior pharynx and epiglottic region.[1] Rarely, tracheal intubation and surgical tracheostomy are required in angina bullosa hemorrhagica patients.

Sex

No sex predilection is reported for angina bullosa hemorrhagica.
Age

Angina bullosa hemorrhagica predominantly affects middle-aged or elderly people. The median age at angina bullosa hemorrhagica presentation is 54 years, with 60% of the patients in the range of 45-70 years. Lesions have not been documented in children younger than 10 years.

Contributor Information and Disclosures

Author

Roman Carlos, DDS  Staff Member, Department of Pathology, Hospital Herrera-Llerandi, Guatemala; Co-Director, Professor, Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, Centro de Medicina Oral de Guatemala; Past President, International Association of Oral Pathologists; Chairman, Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, Centro Clínico de Cabeza y Cuello, Guatemala; Diplomate, American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology

Roman Carlos, DDS is a member of the following medical societies: American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology and International Association of Oral Pathologists

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Specialty Editor Board

Terry L Barrett, MD  Clinical Professor of Dermatology and Pathology, University of Texas Southwestern School of Medicine; Director, ProPath Dermatopathology, Dallas, Texas

Terry L Barrett, MD is a member of the following medical societies: American Academy of Dermatology, American Dermatological Association, American Medical Association, American Society of Dermatopathology, College of American Pathologists, and United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology

Disclosure: Nothing to disclose.

David F Butler, MD  Professor of Dermatology, Texas A&M University College of Medicine; Chair, Department of Dermatology, Director, Dermatology Residency Training Program, Scott and White Clinic, Northside Clinic

David F Butler, MD is a member of the following medical societies: Alpha Omega Alpha, American Academy of Dermatology, American Medical Association, American Society for Dermatologic Surgery, American Society for MOHS Surgery, Association of Military Dermatologists, and Phi Beta Kappa

Disclosure: Nothing to disclose.

Drore Eisen, MD, DDS  Consulting Staff, Department of Dermatology, Dermatology Research Associates of Cincinnati

Drore Eisen, MD, DDS is a member of the following medical societies: American Academy of Dermatology, American Academy of Oral Medicine, and American Dental Association

Disclosure: Nothing to disclose.

Glen H Crawford, MD  Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Dermatology, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine; Chief, Division of Dermatology, The Pennsylvania Hospital

Glen H Crawford, MD is a member of the following medical societies: Alpha Omega Alpha, American Academy of Dermatology, American Medical Association, Phi Beta Kappa, and Society of USAF Flight Surgeons

Disclosure: Nothing to disclose.

Chief Editor

Dirk M Elston, MD  Director, Ackerman Academy of Dermatopathology, New York

Dirk M Elston, MD is a member of the following medical societies: American Academy of Dermatology

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References


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