Dermoscopy Pearls: 
Casts and Pseudocasts

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DISCLOSURE OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDUSTRY

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S016- Hair and Scalp Dermoscopy

I do not have any relevant relationship with industry
Background

• Presence of concretions on the hair shaft is concerning for patients and physicians as the most common cause are nits, a sign of lice infection

• Some cosmetics may resemble casts

• How to distinguish casts, pseudocasts and nits?
Casts and pseudocasts

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Key words: casts; dermoscopy; folliculitis decalvans; hair spray; nits; pseudocasts; trichoscopy.
Casts

• Peripilar keratin casts or pseudonits

• Small movable cylindrical or nodular white-yellowish masses, formed by hyperkeratotic/parakeratotic cells from outer root sheath, that surround the hair shafts
Inflammatory conditions associated with “true” casts

- Folliculitis decalvans
- Psoriasis
- Pityriasis amiantacea
- Seborrheic dermatitis
- Pemphigus vulgaris
- Lichen planopilaris
- Frontal fibrosing alopecia
Folliculitis decalvans

Courtesy of Dr Tosti
Nits

• Tiny, oval shape and attach to the shaft but do not encircle it

• Sign of *pediculosis capitis*
## True casts versus nits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>True casts</th>
<th>Nits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Firm, shiny, white, freely movable tubular concretions that encircle the hair shaft</td>
<td>• Tiny yellow or brown attached to the hair shaft, near to the scalp</td>
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<td>• Many causes</td>
<td>• Caused by <em>Pediculus capitis</em> female lays eggs at base of hair</td>
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<td>• Most common in adults</td>
<td>• Most common in children of all ages</td>
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<td>• Not contagious</td>
<td>• Itchy scalp</td>
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<td>• Usually asymptomatic</td>
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Pseudocasts

• Caused by cosmetic hair sprays, deodorants, and dry shampoos

• Irregular shaped concretions with variable length, thickness, and surface irregularly attached to the hair shafts
Hair spray

Courtesy of Dr Tosti
Highlights

• Even though casts and pseudocasts are benign, they can be barely recognized and may generate unnecessary treatments and anxiety.

• Trichoscopy is a noninvasive and practical diagnostic tool that helps to quick distinguish casts, pseudocasts and nits.

• May be useful in assessing the activity of some diseases and the response of medical treatments, quick screening of family members and post therapeutic follow-up.