

Absence of tongue papillae as a sign of disease



To the Editor: We read the interesting article by Krämer et al.¹ The authors mentioned that the absence of tongue papilla is helpful in the diagnosis of generalized recessive dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa types.¹

It should be noted that the absence of tongue papillae can be caused by a variety of systemic diseases. In fact the entire lingual epithelium can become thinner. Examples of other causes of the absence of tongue papillae include anemia stomatitis, geographic tongue, oral candidiasis, and Sjogren syndrome²⁻⁴; and anemic glossitis and oral candidiasis (Fig 1, A and B). Absence of papillae may also be related to dyspepsia or oral corticosteroids.

Moreover, there is no unified diagnostic standard for the degree of lingual papillary atrophy. While examination of the tongue is relatively simple, it is also necessary to carry out a hematologic and oral candidiasis examination.

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IRB approval: not applicable.

Funding sources: None

Conflicts of interest: None disclosed.

Reprints not available from the authors.

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaad.2020.05.156>



Fig 1. Absence of tongue papillae. (A) Anemic stomatitis. (B) Oral candidiasis.