

Abstract:

Introduction Pembrolizumab is a humanized monoclonal antibody that is approved as a first line treatment for certain oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinomas (OPSCC). It acts as a selective inhibitor of programmed death 1 (PD-1) receptors, reversing T-cell suppression and inducing an anti-tumor response. Pembrolizumab has been documented in association with ocular pathologies, the most common being dry eye and uveitis. In this report, we will discuss how pembrolizumab may have ultimately contributed to corneal ulceration in a patient being treated for OPSCC with metastasis.

Case Presentation A 55 year old male was evaluated in the emergency department for left eye pain and decreased vision. He was found to have a central corneal ulcer in the setting of recent pembrolizumab initiation and neurotrophic keratitis. The patient's clinical state was stabilized, however, he was lost to follow up one week after initial presentation.

Discussion This case report describes the occurrence of a corneal ulcer while undergoing treatment with pembrolizumab, which to the best of our knowledge is the second reported case of corneal ulceration in this setting.