Herpetic folliculitis barbae. A rare cause of folliculitis

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Viral folliculitis is a rare disease usually caused by herpes simplex, herpes zoster and molluscum contagiosum in immune-compromised patients. An otherwise healthy 30 year old patient without history of herpes simplex contracted a folliculitis in the beard region after a flu-like illness. He had no oral or labial lesions but instead showed a crusty erythematous folliculitis confined to the beard region with small grouped vesicles on the neck and reactive cervical lymph nodes. Bacterial and mycological analysis from swabs were negative. The culture was positive for herpes simplex virus and the immune fluorescence showed HSV type 1. Systemic therapy with valaciclovir 2x 500 mg/d and lotio alba locally led to rapid improvement. When confronted with folliculitis, non-bacterial causes such as viral (herpes simplex, herpes zoster, molluscum contagiosum), mycological (pityrosporon, candida), demodex and eosinophilic folliculitis should be taken under consideration.