Tramadol intoxication and tongue laceration

Hossein Sanaei-Zadeh

Clinical

An unconscious 20-year-old male was brought to the Emergency Room 3 hours after ingesting 3 grams of tramadol with the intention of committing suicide.

On intra-oral examination, the patient had multiple lacerations on the right lateral surface of his tongue (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Lateral tongue lacerations (photo taken after the patient regained consciousness)

What is the significance of this finding?
**Answer**

Tramadol toxicity can cause nausea, vomiting, agitation, tachycardia, hypertension, central nervous system depression, respiratory depression, and seizures.1–3

Tongue laceration(s) in a tramadol-intoxicated unconscious patient with no witnesses to occurrence of the seizure(s) is a clinical indicator of generalized tonic-clonic seizure.

Of course, its absence does not exclude a seizure diagnosis. It has been shown that lateral tongue biting has a specificity of 100% for the diagnosis of generalized tonic-clonic seizures.4,5

**Author information:** Hossein Sanaei-Zadeh, MD and Associate Professor, Medical School, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran

**Correspondence:** Dr Hossein Sanaei-Zadeh, Medical School, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Emergency Room/Division of Medical Toxicology, Hazrat Ali-Asghar (p) Hospital, Meshkinfam Street, 7143918796 Shiraz, Iran.

Email: h-sanaiezadeh@tums.ac.ir

**References:**