To the Editor:

We report a case of keratitis caused by *Dictyostelium polycephalum* in an immunocompetent person.

A 35-year-old man sought treatment for redness, pain, and watering in the left eye of 11 days' duration. He had no history of ocular injury or surgery. At the time of his medical visit, he was using ophthalmic solutions of 0.02% chlorhexidine eye drops every half hour and 1% atropine eye drops 3×/d and was asked to return for a follow-up visit the next day. However, the patient did not return and could not be located. After 48 hours’ of incubation, a nonnutrient agar plate showed growth of double-walled, spherical cysts ≈6–7 μm in diameter that had different morphologic features than those of *Acanthamoeba* spp. cysts.

To identify the organism, we extracted DNA from the growth on nonnutrient agar and subjected it to PCR specific for *Acanthamoeba* spp. (3); results were negative. The extracted DNA was then subjected to 18S rDNA PCR for free-living amebas as described by Tsvetkova et al. (4). A PCR product ≈800 bp was obtained and subjected to bidirectional sequencing with fluorescent-labeled dideoxy nucleotide terminators by using ABI 3130 XL automated sequencer in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions (PE Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA, USA).

The Mega BLAST search program (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/blast/megablast.html) of GenBank identified the sequence as *D. polycephalum* (99% similarity with AM168056). We deposited the sequence of our isolate in GenBank (accession no. GU562439). The organism showed cytotoxicity after in vitro inoculation of a rabbit corneal epithelial cell line.

The patient sought treatment 4 months after his initial visit. The left eye visual acuity was now expressed as the ability to see hand movements near the face. Slit-lamp examination showed lid edema and conjunctival congestion. The cornea showed a ring-shaped infiltrate, central thinning, surrounding corneal edema, and pigments on the endothelium (Figure, panel C); these findings were identical to the clinical picture of *Acanthamoeba* keratitis. Repeat corneal scrapings showed organisms of same morphologic features seen on the first visit by microscopy and culture. Organisms...
were reidentified as *Dictyostelium* spp. by sequencing.

Because we were not aware of any drug treatment recommendations for infection by this organism, and the disease was advanced, surgical treatment was advised. Deep anterior lamellar keratoplasty was performed after 2 days. Histopathologic examination of the corneal button showed spherical cysts in mid stroma and in-filtration of the corneal button showed after 2 days. Histopathologic exam-

Figure. A) Spherical cysts of *Dictyostelium* spp. in potassium hydroxide (calcofluor white stain; original magnification ×40) preparation. B) Spherical double wall cysts of *Dictyostelium* spp. (Gram stain; original magnification ×100). C) Cornea of the patient’s left eye, showing a ring-shaped central infiltrate and central thinning. D) Corneal button showing *Dictyostelium* spp. cysts (arrow; hematoxylin and eosin stain; original magnification ×100). A color version of this figure is available online (www.cdc.gov/EID/content/16/10/1646-F.htm).

...on further incubation for 3 weeks at 36°C, no sporocarp formed.

Although we could identify the microorganism, the source of infec-
tion is unknown. Because the patient was a manual laborer, he could have become infected with the organism from contaminated water or soil. The clinical picture for keratitis caused by *D. polycephalum* was indistinguish-
able from that caused by *Acanthamoeba* spp. However, careful attention to cyst morphology in clinical samples and culture enabled us to identify this organism.

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