
**CLINICAL MANIFESTATION, DIAGNOSIS, AND MANAGEMENT OF
NOTOEDRES CATI IN A DOMESTIC CAT: A CASE REPORT FROM ARMONIA
PET CARE, MAKASSAR, INDONESIA**

**Manifestasi Klinis, Diagnosis, dan Tata Laksana Skabies *Notoedres cati* pada Kucing
Domestik: Laporan Kasus dari Armonia Pet Care, Makassar, Indonesia**

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Abstract

Notoedric mange, caused by the ectoparasite *Notoedres cati*, is a significant dermatological condition in domestic cats (*Felis catus*). This case report aims to describe the clinical presentation, diagnostic approach, and therapeutic management of *N. cati* infestation in a young cat, emphasizing its zoonotic potential and challenges in urban settings. A 3-month-old female Himalayan kitten was presented to Armonia Pet Care, Makassar, Indonesia, with clinical signs of mange, including alopecia, erythema, hyperkeratosis, and severe pruritus. Diagnosis was confirmed through superficial skin scraping and microscopic identification of *N. cati*. Treatment involved combined topical antiparasitic therapy (selamectin and sarolaner) with nutritional support, resulting in significant clinical improvement within one week. This case highlights the importance of early diagnosis, appropriate therapy, and environmental management to prevent reinfestation, particularly in urban areas with high risks of cross-contamination. These findings contribute to the scientific understanding of feline scabies and its clinical management in Indonesian veterinary practice. We recommend routine ectoparasite screening for cats in high-density urban areas, owner education about zoonotic risks, and further studies on the efficacy of combined selamectin-sarolaner therapy in multi-cat households.

Keywords: *Felis catus*, feline dermatology, *Notoedres cati*, parasitic skin diseases, zoonosis

Abstrak

Skabies yang disebabkan oleh ektoparasit *Notoedres cati* merupakan kondisi dermatologis penting pada kucing domestik (*Felis catus*). Laporan kasus ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan manifestasi klinis, pendekatan diagnostik, serta tatalaksana terapeutik infestasi *N. cati* pada anak kucing, dengan penekanan pada potensi zoonosis dan tantangan di lingkungan perkotaan. Seekor anak kucing betina ras Himalayan berusia 3 bulan dibawa ke Armonia Pet Care, Makassar, Indonesia, dengan tanda klinis skabies berupa alopesia, eritema, hiperkeratosis, dan pruritus berat. Diagnosis ditegakkan melalui pemeriksaan kerokan kulit superfisial dan identifikasi mikroskopis untuk menemukan *N. cati*. Penanganan menggunakan terapi antiparasit topikal kombinasi (selamektin dan sarolaner) disertai dukungan nutrisi menghasilkan perbaikan klinis signifikan dalam satu minggu. Kasus ini menekankan pentingnya diagnosis dini, terapi tepat, dan manajemen lingkungan untuk mencegah infestasi ulang, terutama di wilayah perkotaan dengan risiko kontaminasi silang tinggi. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman ilmiah skabies kucing dan tatalaksananya dalam praktik kedokteran hewan di Indonesia. Disarankan skrining ektoparasit rutin untuk kucing di area perkotaan padat, edukasi pemilik tentang risiko zoonosis, serta penelitian lebih lanjut mengenai efikasi terapi kombinasi selamektin-sarolaner pada rumah tangga dengan banyak kucing.

Kata kunci: *Felis catus*, feline dermatologi, *Notoedres cati*, penyakit kulit parasitik, zoonosis

INTRODUCTION

Scabies in domestic cats is a parasitic skin disease primarily caused by *Notoedres cati*, a burrowing mite that invades the stratum corneum, triggering inflammation and cutaneous irritation (Suryaningrat, 2024). This ectoparasite, classified within the family Sarcoptidae, shares morphological and behavioral similarities with *Sarcoptes scabiei*, yet *N. cati* is considered more host-specific to felines and is recognized as the dominant cause of mange in cats (Putra, 2024). Clinically, infected cats exhibit intense pruritus, alopecia, erythema, crusting, and hyperkeratosis, particularly in regions such as the face, pinnae, neck, and limbs, which progressively worsen without treatment (Handoko, 2024).

In contrast to *S. scabiei*, which is more frequently observed in canines and only occasionally identified in feline hosts, *N. cati* represents the principal causative agent of mange in cats and poses a zoonotic risk through close contact with infected animals (Suryaningrat, 2024). Transmission typically occurs via direct physical contact, although indirect exposure through contaminated bedding or grooming tools is also possible, particularly in multi-cat households or unsanitary environments (Handoko, 2024). Clinically, affected animals may develop severe discomfort, leading to behavioral changes such as excessive scratching and rubbing, with possible secondary bacterial infections and leukocytosis in prolonged cases (Pramita, 2024).

Confirmation of *N. cati* infection requires diagnostic testing such as superficial skin scraping, tape smear, or trichogram, which facilitates identification of the mites under light microscopy (Qudsiyati et al., 2023). Lesions commonly originate from the edges of the ears and subsequently spread to the head, neck, and body if left untreated (Suryaningrat, 2024). Environmental and management-related risk factors, including irregular administration of anti-ectoparasitic treatments, outdoor roaming behavior, poor sanitation, and high-density animal housing, significantly increase susceptibility to infestation (Handoko, 2024). In clinical settings, cats without routine antiparasitic protocols or those allowed to roam freely are disproportionately affected by this ectoparasitic condition (Qudsiyati et al., 2023).

Despite its clinical relevance, detailed reports on feline scabies due to *N. cati* remain limited in veterinary literature from Indonesia, especially in urban animal care facilities. A study in

Mataram, Indonesia reported a scabies prevalence of 61% in cats presented to veterinary clinics, indicating a substantial clinical burden of *N. cati* infestation in clinical practice (Zulmi et al., 2023). Similarly, another study conducted in Magetan, Indonesia found a prevalence of 32.14%, with identified risk factors including poor hygiene, free-roaming behavior, and contact with stray animals (Cahya et al., 2022). These findings highlight the widespread yet often underreported occurrence of feline scabies across various regions in Indonesia. Comprehensive documentation of clinical progression, diagnostic procedures, and therapeutic response is essential for improving the understanding and clinical management of *N. cati* infections (Palgunadi, 2021). This case report aims to present the clinical manifestations, diagnostic confirmation, and therapeutic outcome of a feline scabies case caused by *Notoedres cati* in a kitten treated at Armonia Pet Care, Makassar.

RESEARCH METHODS

Approval of Ethical Commission

Ethical approval for this case report was given by the Animal and Research Ethics Committee, Animal Hospital of Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia (Approval Number: 013/UN4.1.RSHUH/B/PP36/2025).

Signs and Symptoms

A 3-month-old female Himalayan kitten, weighing approximately 500 grams and exhibiting a seal point coat coloration, was presented to Armonia Pet Care in Makassar, Indonesia due to dermatologic abnormalities. The patient appeared cachectic with a marked reduction in activity and general body condition. Physical inspection revealed widespread dermatologic lesions affecting multiple anatomical regions.

Anamnesis

According to the owner, clinical signs first emerged approximately two weeks prior to presentation, coinciding with the introduction of the kitten to its dam, which had a prior history of a similar dermatological condition. Key clinical concerns included the presence of extensive crusting across various regions of the body and a progressive decline in appetite. Prior home management involved frequent bathing twice daily using warm water and topical application of traditional oil. However, these interventions did not result in clinical improvement. The kitten was maintained in an indoor environment but had recent close contact with the dam, which had reportedly recovered from a similar cutaneous disorder.

Clinical Examination

A complete physical examination was conducted, including systematic inspection, palpation, percussion, and auscultation. Vital parameters were within the following ranges: rectal temperature of 37.5°C, heart rate of 220 beats per minute, respiratory rate of 25 breaths per minute, and capillary refill time (CRT) < 3 seconds. Body condition scoring revealed a score of 2/9, indicating an underweight status. Dermatological examination revealed multifocal alopecia, particularly prominent at the nuchal region, with erythema, hyperkeratosis, and crusting on the pinnae, facial area, nuchal region, and all four extremities. Severe pruritus was evident, accompanied by extensive excoriation lesions over large areas of the integument. A strong, malodorous scent was also detected, primarily attributed to retained urine on the skin, likely resulting from diminished grooming behavior secondary to discomfort and inflammation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Clinical examination revealed multiple dermatological abnormalities in the kitten, including alopecia, erythema, hyperkeratosis, and crusting, predominantly affecting the pinnae, facial region, nuchal area, and all four extremities, accompanied by pronounced pruritus. Hyperkeratotic changes were especially prominent on the nose and periocular areas. Additionally, early lesions with similar characteristics were observed on the abdominal and dorsal regions (Figure 1). Systemic signs such as mild weight loss were also noted, likely associated with increased scratching activity and reduced nutritional intake.

Confirmatory diagnosis was established through cytological evaluation using the superficial skin scraping technique on affected areas showing hyperkeratotic crusts and alopecia, particularly on both pinnae and the digital regions of the limbs. This examination aimed to detect the presence of ectoparasitic infestation. Microscopic observation revealed *N. cati*, characterized by a roughly oval body shape, four pairs of legs with the third and fourth pairs not extending beyond the body margin, and a long, unsegmented pedicel. These morphological features are diagnostic for *N. cati* infestation in feline scabies (Wyckliff, 2019) (Figure 2).

Diagnostic

Superficial skin scraping was used as a diagnostic method to identify the presence of *N. cati*, the causative mite of scabies in felines. Samples are collected from areas exhibiting dermatological abnormalities such as hyperkeratosis, crusting, excoriations, and alopecia, including the pinnae, cranial area, nuchal region, and hind limbs. The procedure involves gently abrading lesion margins with a sterile surgical blade, followed by the addition of 10% KOH to the collected material to dissolve keratin, facilitating mite visualization under a microscope at 400x magnification. This method is considered the gold standard for confirming *N. cati* infestation, as it allows for the microscopic identification of mites with specific morphological characteristics, thereby distinguishing them from other dermatological conditions that do not involve mites with similar features (Wyckliff, 2019; Yudhana et al., 2021).

Differential diagnosis for feline scabies necessitates a thorough evaluation of other skin conditions presenting with similar symptoms. Sarcoptic mange, caused by *S. scabiei*, is a primary differential, presenting with severe pruritus, hair loss, erythema, and crust formation, particularly on the ear margins and facial areas (Susanto et al., 2021). While symptoms may overlap, *N. cati* can be distinguished from *S. scabiei* by its smaller, more rounded body, lack of spines, and dorsal anus, in contrast to *S. scabiei*'s larger size, prominent spines, and posterior anus (Fatma et al., 2021; Qudsiyati et al., 2023). Demodicosis caused by *Demodex sp.* also leads to alopecia and skin lesions, but the pruritus is generally less severe than with *N. cati* infestations (Puspitadesy et al., 2023). Dermatophytosis caused by *Microsporum canis* is a fungal infection, can manifest as localized hair loss and desquamation, though pruritus intensity varies (Jainudin and Kemalarani, 2025; Fauziyyah et al., 2024). Achieving an accurate diagnosis integrates a detailed medical history, comprehensive physical assessment, and targeted diagnostic procedures to effectively differentiate these conditions and exclude others like allergic dermatitis, ensuring appropriate treatment and preventing disease dissemination.

Therapy

The treatment administered consisted of causative therapy using a spot-on antiparasitic formulation containing 15 mg of selamectin and 2.5 mg of sarolaner per 0.25 mL tube (Revolution Plus[®], Zoetis). The recommended dosage for selamectin in cats is 6 mg/kg BW (Sadhu et al., 2024). However, due to the patient's low body weight of 500 grams, a reduced

dose of 3 mg/kg (equivalent to 0.05 mL) was administered topically to the nape region. A repeat application was recommended 14 days after the initial dose to ensure complete eradication of the ectoparasites. Supportive therapy included the daily oral administration of a multivitamin supplement containing vitamin E and omega-3, -6, and -9 fatty acids (Dermatrix[®], Kala Health), given every 24 hours at a dosage of one-quarter tablet for 14 days, with the aim of improving skin integrity and promoting coat regeneration. In light of the kitten's underweight condition and clinical signs of malnutrition, an additional multivitamin supplement (Complivit[®], VetPlus) was administered orally at a dosage of 0.5 mL every 24 hours for 14 days to support metabolic function and enhance overall physiological recovery.

Nutritional recommendations were given to the owner, including the use of a complete and balanced commercial kitten diet formulated to meet the specific nutritional requirements of growing felines. The diet should be rich in high-quality animal protein, essential fatty acids, and fortified with vitamins and trace minerals to promote immune function, support skin healing, and optimize growth. The owner was further advised to increase feeding frequency to 4–5 small meals per day to accommodate the kitten's limited gastric capacity and ensure sufficient caloric intake during the recovery phase. According to the owner, three days after the initial antiparasitic application, crusts began to detach from the skin. At seven days post-treatment, complete resolution of crusting was observed across the entire body surface, indicating a rapid and favorable clinical response to the therapeutic protocol.

Discussion

Notoedres cati remains the primary etiological agent of scabies in cats across various regions in Indonesia, affecting both domestic and stray populations. Recent data indicate varying prevalence rates, including 57% at Scotty Pet Care, Mataram, Indonesia, suggesting a widespread and concerning level of infestation (Susanto et al., 2021). In addition, the prevalence of *N. cati* has also been reported in other countries, such as Jataí, Brazil, with a rate of 20% (da Silva et al., 2021). In a study conducted by Colella et al. (2020), involving 1,152 cats across 8 Asian countries during 2017-2018, Indonesia, Philippines, and China ranked at the top. In Indonesia, particularly in Jakarta, Bogor, and Yogyakarta, 34.6% of 78 cats were found to be infected with *N. cati*. This report also presents a clinically confirmed case from a veterinary clinic in Makassar, which shows that even in well-monitored environments, scabies remains a significant dermatological challenge. These findings emphasize the importance of routine surveillance, especially in densely populated urban areas, where the risk of cross-contamination is higher (Yudhana et al., 2021). The prevalence and incidence of scabies are indeed frequently reported in various parts of the world, particularly in countries with subtropical and tropical climates, where such climates greatly support the development of the agents causing scabies (Aprilia, 2014; Hilma and Ghazali, 2014).

The characteristic lesions observed in this case such as alopecia, crusting, erythema, and intense pruritus localized on the face and auricular regions are highly suggestive of *N. cati* infestation and are widely recognized as pathognomonic (Suryaningrat et al., 2024; Handoko and Agusthusana, 2024). Severe pruritus can result in self-trauma, leading to secondary infections and systemic effects, including anorexia, weight loss, and general debilitation (Wyckliff, 2019). Such manifestations have been previously documented in both local and international case reports, further supporting the clinical relevance of early diagnosis. Cachexia in this case likely developed due to chronic irritation, stress, and decreased appetite from persistent discomfort (Putra et al., 2024). Diagnosis in this case was confirmed through superficial skin scraping and KOH clearing, which revealed typical morphological features of *N. cati*, including a small, round body with short legs and long pedicels, in line with established descriptions (Wyckliff, 2019). This technique remains the gold standard for diagnosing *N. cati*

and was successfully applied in similar reports across Java, Bali, and Sulawesi (Györke et al., 2022; Pramita et al., 2024). The diagnostic utility of scraping lies in its ability to capture active mites from crusted lesions, especially in auricular and facial regions where infestations typically initiate (Dewi et al., 2022). While non-invasive methods like tape tests exist, scraping provides superior diagnostic accuracy (Suryaningrat et al., 2024).

Therapeutic success in this case was achieved using a spot-on formulation containing selamectin and sarolaner, both of which have demonstrated high efficacy against mite infestations (Sadhu et al., 2024). Clinical improvement was evident within seven days, marked by decreased pruritus, lesion regression, and behavioral normalization. This rapid response supports findings from other studies that reported complete recovery in 7–14 days when treated with either selamectin, ivermectin, or imidacloprid-moxidectin combinations (Fatma et al., 2021; Ningrum et al., 2023; Putra et al., 2024). Furthermore, the addition of multivitamins and high-protein nutritional support played a vital role in restoring the cat's general health, as previously emphasized in reports highlighting the importance of nutritional intervention in dermatological recovery (Putra et al., 2024). Effective case management extends beyond pharmacological intervention. In this case, early diagnosis, appropriate antiparasitic therapy, and nutritional rehabilitation were essential for the young and underweight patient's recovery. Owner education regarding parasite transmission, environmental sanitation, and avoiding inappropriate home remedies like essential oils is crucial in preventing reinfection (Handoko and Agusthusana, 2024; Dewi et al., 2022). Environmental control, including cage disinfection and temporary isolation of infected animals, has also been emphasized in several case reports as critical to ensuring treatment success and reducing community-level transmission (Pramita et al., 2024; Ningrum et al., 2023). These preventive approaches should become standard in urban clinics managing dermatopathies of parasitic origin.

This case report has certain limitations, no long term follow up was conducted after the final dose of antiparasitic treatment, leaving reinfection risks unmonitored. Future studies should include scheduled post-treatment evaluations to assess recurrence, chronicity, or mite resistance. While skin scraping confirmed *N. cati*, no histopathological evaluation was performed to quantify dermal inflammation or confirm secondary infections, which could enrich the understanding of pathophysiological impacts. It is also recommended that comparative therapeutic trials be conducted to evaluate efficacy across different antiparasitic protocols in urban feline populations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This case report highlights the significant clinical burden of *Notoedres cati* in domestic cats, particularly in urban veterinary clinics. The effective management of the condition with a combination of antiparasitic therapy and nutritional support resulted in rapid recovery, emphasizing the importance of early diagnosis and timely intervention. Preventive measures, including environmental control and education, are essential to minimize reinfection and ensure long-term management of the condition in feline populations. Future studies should include long-term follow-up to monitor recurrence and evaluate the effectiveness of different therapeutic protocols.

Recommendations

Urban veterinary clinics are encouraged to implement standardized protocols for environmental control and carry out systematic post-treatment monitoring in order to support long-term recovery and minimize the potential for reinfestation or recurrence.

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Figure



Figure 1. Clinical signs of scabies in a kitten. A. Hyperkeratosis on the facial area, including the nose and periocular region; B. Hyperkeratosis on the pinnae; C. Hyperkeratosis, erythema, and alopecia on both forelimbs; D. Hyperkeratosis, erythema, and alopecia on both hind limbs.

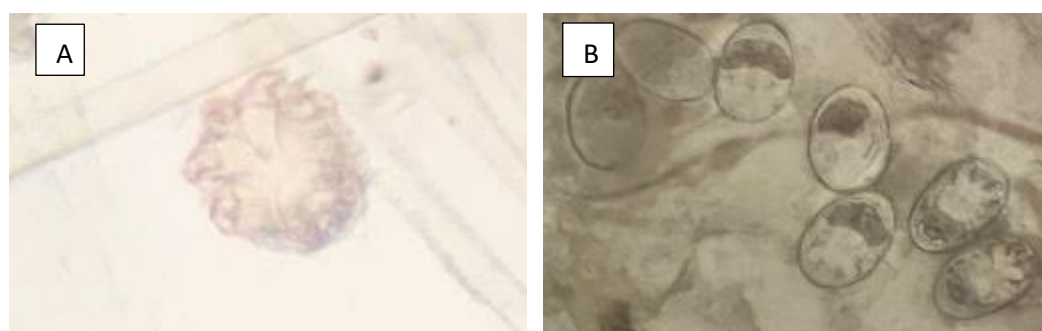


Figure 2. Microscopic identification of *Notoedres cati* at 400x magnification. A. Adult *Notoedres cati* mite with oval body and short legs; B. Egg of *Notoedres cati* from superficial skin scraping.