A 42-year-old woman presented with a painless white lesion on her tongue for a month. She had a similar episode 3 years back that had resolved spontaneously. On examination there were multiple annular reddish patches on the tongue surrounded by raised, white well-defined borders (Figure 1). A diagnosis of geographic tongue was made and the patient reassured about the benign nature of the condition. The lesions resolved after 2 months, and there is no evidence of recurrence at present. Geographic tongue is a common benign condition that affects 2%-3% of the population. It is characterized by the development of smooth red areas of depapillation giving the tongue a map-like appearance. These lesions migrate over time; therefore, it is also called benign migratory glossitis. The etiology is unknown and most of the cases are asymptomatic; however, some patients may have burning sensation on eating spicy or acidic food. The differential diagnosis includes oral lichen planus, erythematous candidiasis, leukoplakia, glossitis, and chemical burns. The clinical features and appearance are typical and biopsy is unnecessary. The lesions typically resolve spontaneously and no treatment is required. The prognosis is good; however, recurrences are common and new lesions can develop quickly in other areas of the tongue.

REFERENCES