

# OK State University, Tulsa Doctors Examine Unknown 'Fibers'

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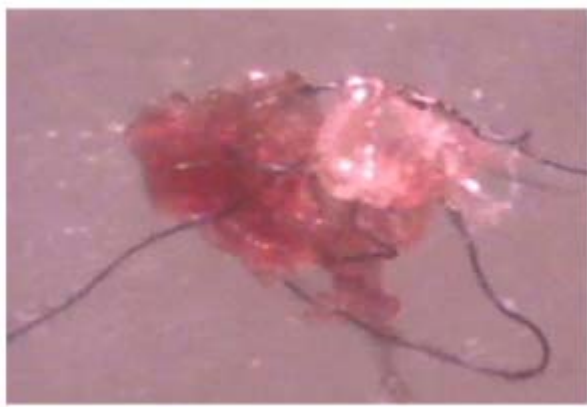
It sounds like something from the Twilight Zone. People claiming to have strings, not hairs, growing out of their skin.

Doctors and nurses say even they can't believe what they're seeing.

Dr. Raphael Stricker, who treats morgellon's patients, says it's really very bizarre to see the strings. Ginger Savely is a nurse practitioner who works with morgellon's patients.

She says, "This didn't seem like anything I'd ever seen that was coming out of the human body."

So what are these 'strings' and why are they lurking under people's skin? Disease detectives around the country are baffled.



Carol Arledge, a rancher in West Texas, was one of the first people to see white fibers and black specks popping out of her skin. When she noticed the 'strings' she went to her dermatologist.

Arledge says, "She said, 'I can't believe you did this to yourself.' I said do you want me to come back if it doesn't get any better? She said, 'no, if it doesn't get better, you need to find a psychiatrist.'"

But Carol says she did not do this to herself, regardless of what her dermatologist believes.

Another patient, Marnie Weinke, says there is no way she would have just scratched sores into her own face.

Carol and Marnie aren't alone, thousands of others from various parts of the country complain of similar ailments. They say it feels like something is crawling beneath their skin and that they are sick and exhausted. Recently, even the Centers for Disease Control has started

looking into morgellon's disease.

The mystery of morgellon's soon caught the attention of a Tulsa researcher, Dr. Randy Wymore. He wondered if the fibers in the skin had simply rubbed off of people's clothing. He says when he looked at the fibers from clothing and the fibers found under the skin there was no similarity.

So he decided to consult with colleagues at Oklahoma State University.

OSU doctors admit at first they were a little skeptical, but they agreed to see morgellon's patients. They have taken samples of the fibers found under the skin and then put them under a microscope. What they found were black, red, and blue fibers lurking under the skin. Doctors at OSU have seen about 25 patients, and say they are convinced morgellon's is real.

But the medical establishment says they are wrong.

Dr. Noah Scheinfeld, from Columbia University, says morgellon's is not real. He says it's all in the patients head. Dr. Scheinfeld says, "This is somebody who is picking at themselves and people pick at themselves for all sorts of reasons." He says once patients create a sore they shove fibers into it.

However, the OSU doctors say that is not possible. They say most of the fibers they found were away from the sores, under unbroken, smooth skin. Still, no matter who you believe, there's one question that none of the doctors could answer. What are these fibers?

Dr. Vitaly Citovsky, a Suny Stoney Brook Biologist, says he might have the answer. He says he found a gene that only exists in plants in the skin of the morgellons patients. Many of those who claim to have morgellan's say they have spent time working in the soil.

As research continues the debate will rage on.

Dr. Rhonda Casey, from Oklahoma State University, says "I would challenge any of these physicians who think that we are just feeding into the delusions to come and examine a group of these patients and see what I've seen."

Delusion or disease, the threads of this argument continue on.

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