

*Demodex* spp. are minute cigar-shaped burrowing mites, inhabiting the hair follicles and sebaceous glands of animals, including humans. The mites can be detected in deep and focal skin scrapings and in hair plucks. These mites are usually common, harmless commensals of the skin fauna and clinical demodicosis is caused by a massive proliferation and pathogenesis is linked to host immunosuppression.

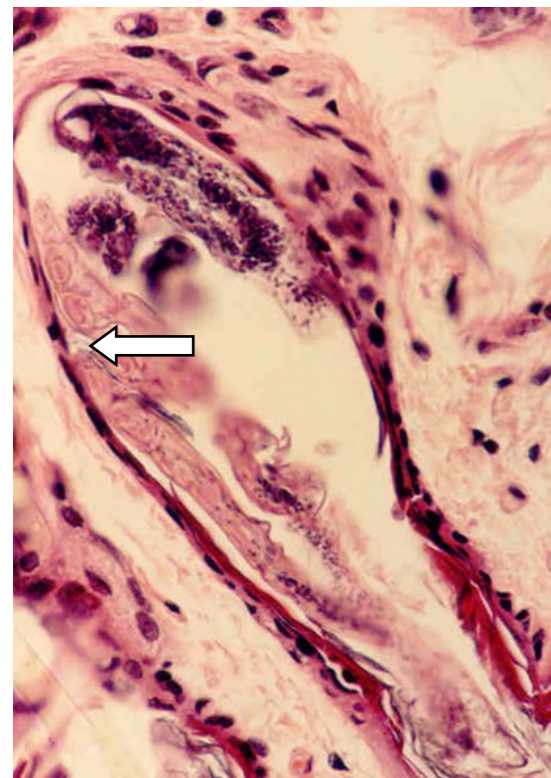
Canine demodicosis is classified in various ways depending on the presenting clinical features. The dog below has a generalised condition with widespread erythema and pustules.



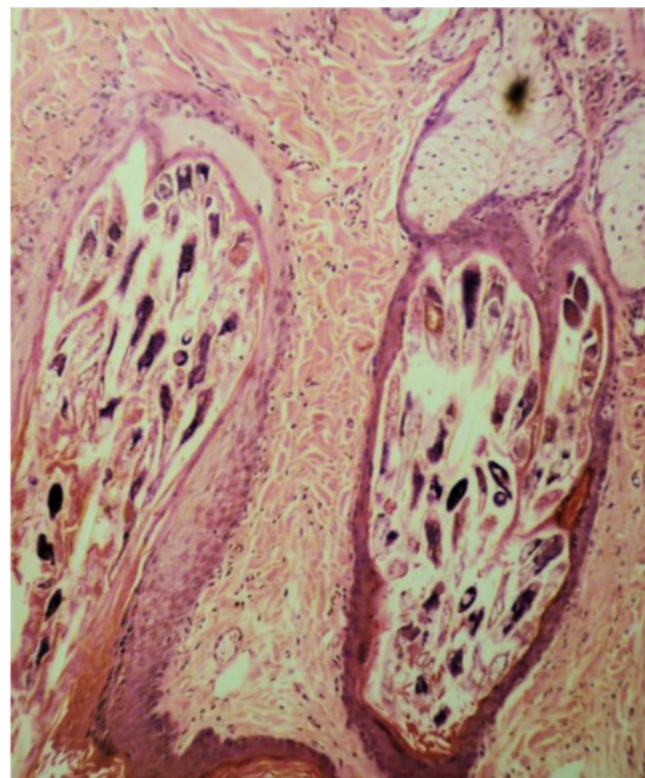
*Demodex* spp. Demodicosis in cats is a rare condition caused by *Demodex cati* (right) a very elongated mite, or *Demodex gatoi*, (left) which is very short, and is unusual in that it lives in superficial keratin layer (stratum corneum), not hair follicles and sebaceous glands.



*Demodex canis* adult mites are approx. 200µm in length, worm-shaped with stumpy legs ending in small claws. The opisthostoma (the tapering part) is half the length of the mite and is striated.



*Demodex* may be identified in H&E stained skin sections by their cigar-shape and the presence of stumpy legs (arrow); There are often several mites inside a single follicle or sebaceous gland and all the life cycle stages may be present.



The immature life cycle stages include eggs, which have an unusual small humped appearance.

