

Alopecic plaques in children: Think aplasia cutis congenita

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Sir,

Aplasia cutis congenita (ACC) is a rare, etiologically heterogeneous scalp malformation characterized by the absence of the epidermis or all skin [1]. The management of ACC is a delicate process, usually involving surgical repair [2].

Herein, we report a rare case of aplasia cutis congenita, particularly in its late presentation. A five-year-old child, with no pathological history, presented scalp lesions persistent for two years. A dermatological examination revealed three, well-limited, alopecic plaques with irregular contours of variable sizes in the medioparietal region of the scalp, with a negative traction sign (Fig. 1a). Dermoscopy revealed peri-pillar scales and tufted hairs in places with a downy appearance toward the periphery (Fig. 1b). A CT scan of the skull revealed craniosostenosis of the scaphocephalic type, without the need for reconstruction.

Aplasia cutis congenita is an abnormality affecting the scalp in approx. 80–90% of cases [1]. Scalp lesions at birth are usually well-demarcated and non-inflammatory and vary in size (from several millimeters to more than 10 cm). Most lesions only involve the scalp and tend to be superficial [2]. In approx. 20–30% of patients, abnormalities of the underlying cranial bone will be associated. It has multiple etiologies implicated: genetic factors, teratogens, vascular abnormalities, drugs, and intrauterine trauma [1,2]. Cases of extensive ACC require MRI to evaluate bony and intracranial malformations. Histologic examination reveals a scarred tissue lacking skin appendages and elastic fibers. The treatment of ACC usually involves



Figure 1: (a) Two well-limited, alopecic plaques involving the medioparietal region of the scalp. (b) Dermoscopic features including peri-pillar scales, tufted hair in places, and a downy appearance in the periphery.

a conservative approach in the cases of simple scalp aplasia, or surgical, using skin flaps and grafts, in the case of associated bone deformities. This is to prevent bleeding and infection [2]. Aplasia cutis congenita of the scalp is a rare malformation, easily diagnosed, yet with difficult management, especially if associated with complex malformations.

Consent

The examination of the patient was conducted according to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms, in which the patients gave their consent for images and other clinical information to be included in the journal. The patients understand that their names and initials will not be published and due effort will be made to conceal their identity, but that anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

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