Dermatology Practical & Conceptual

Bilateral Facial Hair Whorls in a Child

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Case Presentation

A 6-year-old Bangladeshi boy, in good general condition, presented to the outpatient clinic for a hypopigmented patch of the abdominal region, compatible with nevus depigmentosus, but there were also two patches of bilateral hair whorls in the sideburns area. No other significant dermatological signs were observed.

Teaching Point

Hair whorls are a physiological condition well described in the literature [1]; they are usually localized on the scalp, in the parietal region, usually single and clockwise. Anterior localization, different from the more common localizations, has been considered a possible marker of NF1 [2]. Several pathogenetic theories have been proposed for hair whorls, including the most accepted 'mechanical tension' theory (stretching of the epidermis during the rapid expansion of the cranium while the hair follicle grows downward into deeper tissues), or 'inheritance' theory (genetic predisposition) [1].

We were not able to find another report of localization of hair whorls in the beard area in the literature (probably also due to the scarcity of facial hair in children) which could pose problems in differential diagnosis.

Medline search with the keywords 'facial hair whorl', 'beard whorl', 'facial hair vortex' does not allow to find reports of this variant.

We describe an unusual case of the presence of bilateral hair whorls on the face of a child (apparently healthy except for nevus depigmentosus) (Figure 1). Further observations will be needed to evaluate if this is a normal variant or if the facial hair whorl represents a possible marker of another associated genetic condition.

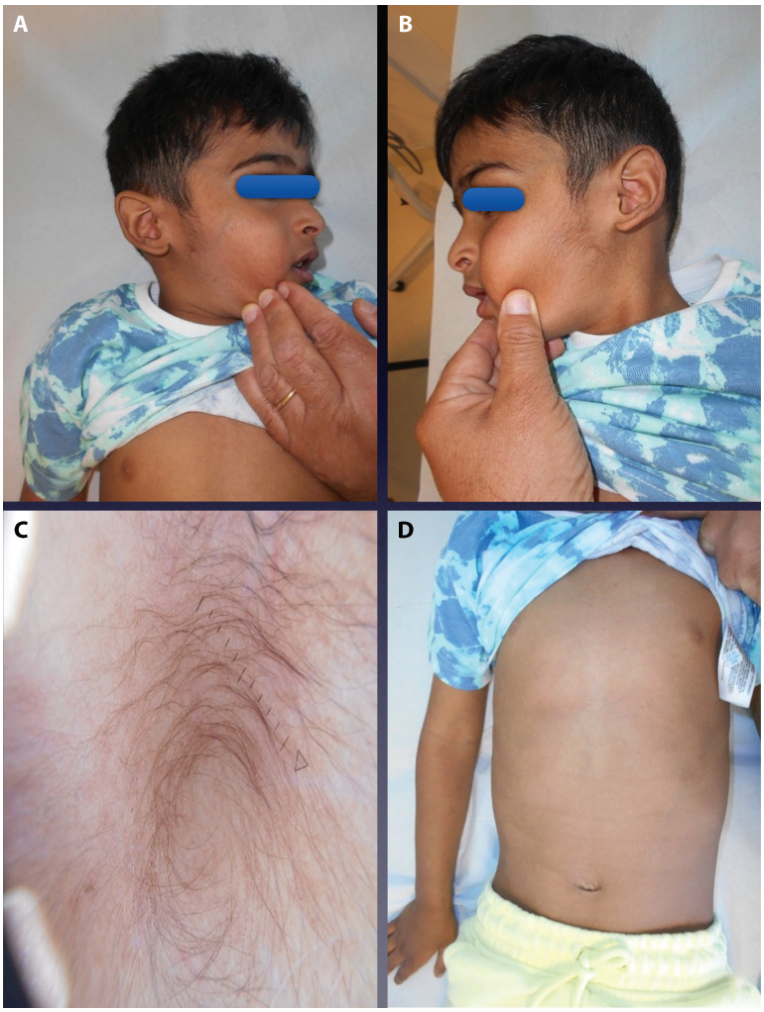

Figure 1. (A-D) Bilateral facial whorls (A,B), with correspondent dermatoscopy (C). Nevus depigmentosus of the abdomen in the same patient (D).

References

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