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Images

Cutaneous markers of occult spinal dysraphism

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A female infant was born at 40 weeks' gestational age after an uncomplicated pregnancy with normal prenatal ultrasound findings. After birth, the newborn was found to have a midline sacrococcygeal soft tissue protrusion, a deviated gluteal cleft, and a left paraspinal hypopigmented macula (Fig. 1). The rest of the examination was normal. A spinal magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) performed when the infant was 5 days' old confirmed the presence of spinal cord tethering, sacrococcygeal lipomyelocele, and dermal sinus tract in continuity with the protrusion (Fig. 2).

Because of the common ectodermal origin of the skin and nervous tissue, midline cutaneous lesions are often associated with occult spinal dysraphism (OSD). When present, these cutaneous markers warrant an imaging study, because early diagnosis of OSD improves neurological and orthopedic outcomes. MRI is the gold standard for diagnosing OSD, but ultrasound screening can be acceptable in young infants with low-risk lesions.[1,2] In this case, the caudal appendage and the combined cutaneous markers conferred a high risk for OSD.[1,2]

Spinal dermal sinuses are often associated with a tethered spinal cord and/or inclusion tumors and predispose to an increased risk for cerebrospinal fluid infection and

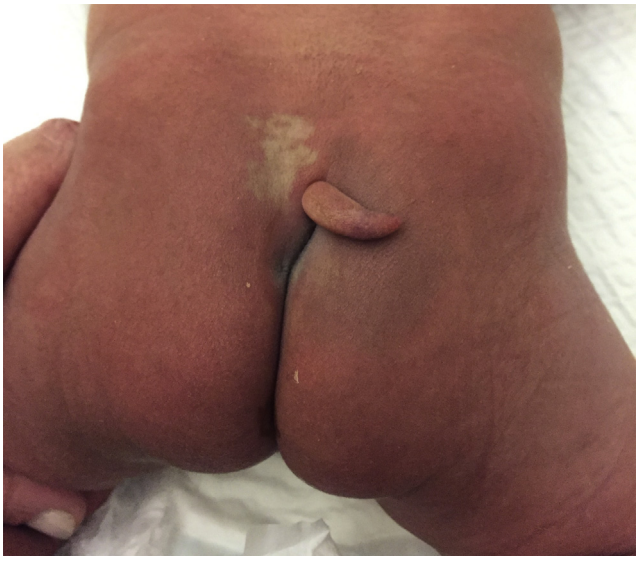

Figure 1 Pseudotail, deviated gluteal cleft, and paraspinal hypopigmented macula.

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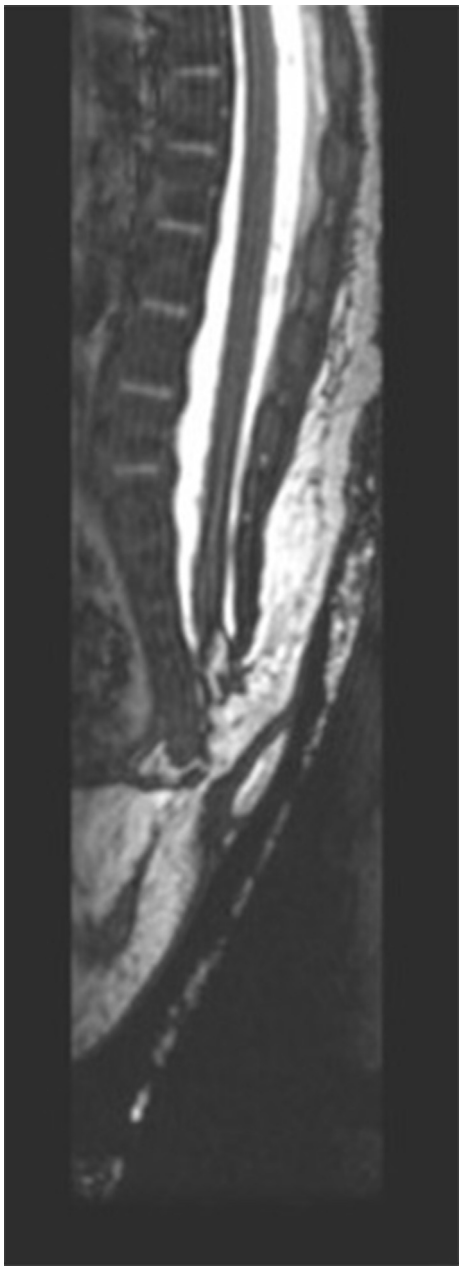

Figure 2 Spinal MRI showing a sacrococcygeal lipomyelocele and a tethered spinal cord.

abscess formation. Treatment includes surgery and must comprise total resection of the sinus tract as well as correction of the associated spinal malformations.[3] If not timely treated, a tethered spinal cord can result in multiple dysfunctions, including neurological (sensorimotor), orthopedic (progressive deformities), urological (neurogenic bladder, urinary incontinence), and bowel (constipation, fecal incontinence) dysfunctions.

Conflicts of interest statement

The authors have no conflicts of interest relevant to this article.

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