

Case Report

Pterygium inversum unguis

Eswari L*, Revathi TN

Department of Dermatology, Victoria Hospital, Bangalore Medical College, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

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***Correspondence:**

Dr. Eswari L

E-mail: eshwaril@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

Pterygium Inversum Unguis (PIU) is a rare nail abnormality characterized by adherent hyponychium to the ventral surface of nail plate. Most of the few cases reported are acquired conditions associated with connective tissue disorders. Very few cases of congenital PIU have been reported. We report for the first time, PIU in two sisters born of second degree consanguineous marriage involving second toe of both feet present since birth.

Keywords: Pterygium inversum unguis, Hyponychium, Congenital

INTRODUCTION

Pterygium inversum unguis is a rare nail abnormality where there is adherence of the distal nail bed to the ventral surface of the nail plate obliterating the distal nail groove. This condition may be congenital or acquired. The acquired conditions are usually associated with various connective tissue disorders like systemic lupus erythematosus, progressive systemic sclerosis etc.

CASE REPORT

A 11-year old girl born of second degree consanguineous marriage presented to our OPD with nail abnormality of the 2nd toe of both feet present since birth. It was asymptomatic until 8-months ago when she developed pain in those toes while walking. Her younger sister aged 8-years, also gave history of similar abnormality of 2nd toe of both feet present since birth. She was asymptomatic.

On examination distal nail bed was adherent to the ventral surface of the nail plate. It was soft to palpate and was tender in the elder sister. There were no other complaints or abnormalities in both the sisters. There was

no similar complaint in any of the family members. Subungual exostosis was ruled out in both sisters by taking radiographic images of both feet. Hence diagnosis of pterygium inversum unguis probably of autosomal recessive inheritance was made.



Figure 1: Pterygium inversum unguis.

DISCUSSION

Pterygium Inversum Unguis (PIU) is a rare nail abnormality which was first described by Caputo and Prandi in 1973. It is characterized by adherence of hyponychium to the underside of nail plate.¹

Acquired conditions are associated with various connective tissue disorders like scleroderma,² systemic lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis etc.,

This condition was also reported to be associated with leprosy.³

Two patients with stroke have been found to have acquired pterygium inversum unguis. In one case there was bilateral involvement of fingers,⁴ in the other there was unilateral involvement.⁵

PIU can also occur as allergic reactions to acrylics especially formaldehyde containing nail hardeners.⁶

Most of the cases with PIU have been found in women between the ages 20 and 70 years. Finger nails are affected more common than toes. They usually have a bilateral occurrence with involvement of all toes or finger nails or few nails of both.⁴

Congenital PIU occurring on the 4th toe as autosomal recessive trait has been described.⁷

Here in we report PIU occurring in two sisters born of 2nd degree consanguineous marriage involving the 2nd toe bilaterally with no similar history in the family. Use of force to push back the advancing hyponychium is an extremely painful approach resulting in severe bleeding.

Hence the treatment of this condition poses a great challenge.

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