Monilethrix

A 4-year-old boy was referred to our dermatology department for evaluation of a 3-year history of hair loss. His medical history was unremarkable. Examination revealed short, sparse, and brittle hair over the scalp and eyebrows, and he presented hyperkeratotic papules localized to the occipital scalp (Figure 1). His nails and teeth seemed to be normal.

Dermoscopic examination showed regular constrictions of the shaft with elliptical nodes separated by internodes, broken hair, with a tendency to curve the hair in different directions (Figure 2). Light microscopy revealed regularly beaded hairs with constriction and tendency of hair shafts to fracture at the sites of these constrictions (Figure 3).

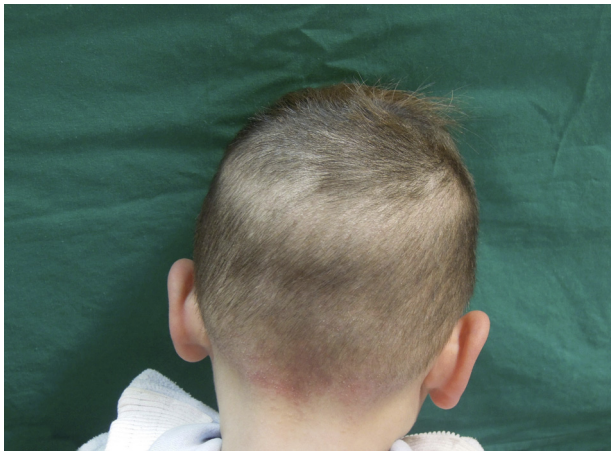

Figure 1. Short and sparse hairs.

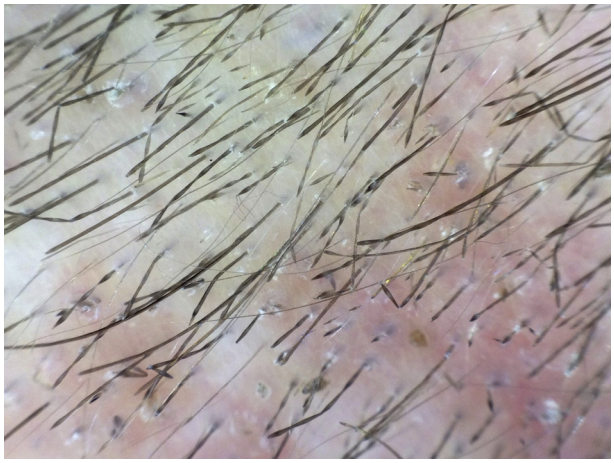

Figure 2. Elliptical nodes separated by internodes under dermoscopy.

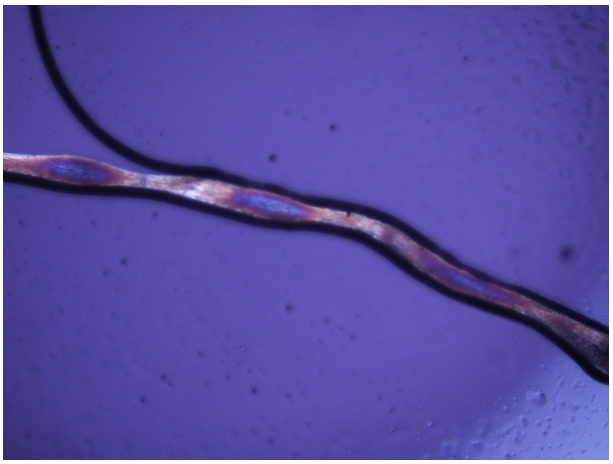

Figure 3. Under polarized microscopy, the elliptical nodes are medullated; however, internodes are narrow and are devoid of medulla.

Monilethrix is caused by mutations in genes coding the human basic hair keratins. The hair breaks easily, especially over sites of friction, such as the occipital area.[1] It can also be associated with koilonychia, syndactyly, dental abnormalities, cataract, and blepheritis.[1] Monilethrix occurs during early childhood and may resolve spontaneously in puberty. Avoiding mechanical damage during combing or hair washing is the most effective step in the treatment of this rare hereditary condition.[2] ■

Data Statement

Data sharing statement available at www.jpeds.com.

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