

Hairgrowth over the Thenar and the Sole in Mal de Meleda (Mljet Disease)

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Two males suffering from Mal de Meleda are described. Both had hairgrowth over the right thenar and one of them had hairgrowth on the sides of the right index and middle finger. In a third male a few black hairs over the right sole were seen. (Received October 27, 1984.)

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CASE REPORT

In two males with Mal de Meleda we observed hairgrowth over the right thenar. The first patient was 69, the second 53 years old. In the older the hairs were black, about 3-10 mm long, localized over the radial side of the right thenar (Fig. 1). Hairs existed also over the sides of the first phalanx of the index and of the middle finger of the right hand. In the younger patient, hairs also occurred over the radial side of the right thenar, but they were shorter than in the first patient. In four females with this affliction no such hairgrowth was observed. In a third male of 53 years a few black hairs were found over the right sole (Fig. 2). In our reported two male patients and in the four females no hairs over the sole were found.

DISCUSSION

Mal de Meleda is an autosomal recessively inherited acroerythrokeratoderma with some obligatory and some facultative symptoms (1). Obligatory are: the transgressive erythrokeratoderma of the palms and soles, plantar and palmar hyperhidrosis and dystrophic changes of the nails. Facultative symptoms are: lichenoid plaques on some parts of the skin (2), perioral erythema (1, 2, 3) and lingua plicata (1, 3).

The hairgrowth over the thenar and the sole, that we report here, seems also to be a facultative symptom in some males. It is noteworthy that hairgrowth over the reported

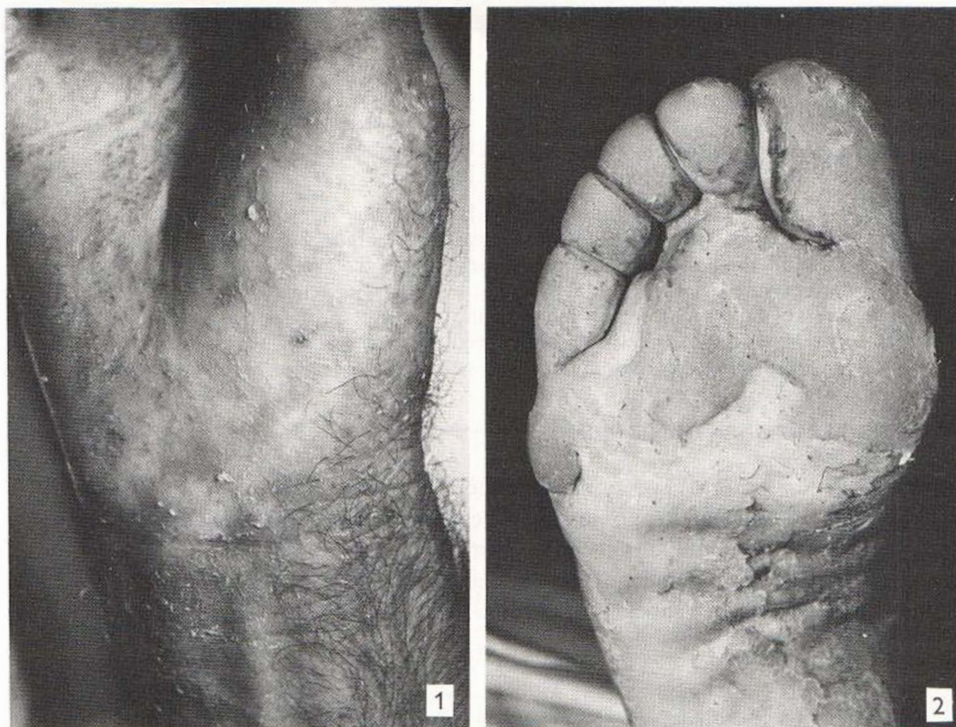


Fig. 1. Hairs on the radial side of the right thenar of the first patient.

Fig. 2. Few hairs on the right sole of the third patient.

areas of the skin occurred in males and not in females. Further it is interesting that this occurred only over the right thenar.

This finding could pathogenetically be the consequence of an error of differentiation of skin ordinarily devoid of hair but rich in sweat glands. This could be an example of mosaicism (4). Whether this is a trait linked to the X-chromosome remains an open question. It is, however, intriguing that there was an absence of hairgrowth in the females, which could be an effect of lyonization (4).

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