

NAIL DISORDERS

MEDIAN CANALIFORM DYSTROPHY OF HELLER IN A PATIENT WITH VITILIGO

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Background: Median canaliform dystrophy of Heller or solenonychia is a nail disorder mainly affecting the thumb nail as a longitudinal fir tree-like. Repeated trauma of the nail matrix by picking the proximal nail fold can induce this entity, but it can also appear after cryotherapy or after treatment with retinoids. Vitiligo represents a chronic pigmentary disorder which is due to the loss of melanocytes in the epidermis. In vitiligo, new lesions may develop in areas of trauma, a process known as the Koebner phenomenon or the isomorphic response.

Observation: We report the case of a 35-year-old female patient who presented for depigmented patches affecting the hands evolving for 2 years. Clinical examination revealed well demarcated hypopigmented patches over the dorsal part of the distal fingers, thumbnails and palmar region, findings that were consistent with the diagnosis of vitiligo. Moreover, her thumbnails had a median longitudinal ridge resembling a fir tree or a feather. The other fingernails and toenails did not have any anomalies. The patient admitted that she had been scratching and pushing the proximal nail fold of the thumbnails for more than 10 years, especially when she was feeling anxious. The nail changes were suggestive of median canaliform nail dystrophy of Heller. The patient was advised to avoid trauma of the hands, in order to limit the extension of her both conditions. For vitiligo, she was prescribed topical clobetasol propionate twice daily for one month and a 15% urea cream for her nails.

Key message: We report the occurrence of median canaliform nail dystrophy of Heller, a rare nail anomaly, in a patient with vitiligo, highlighting the idea that repeated trauma was the key-factor in this case.