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Camphor burns over the forehead: Socially relevant non-homicidal injury in a child

Sir,

We reported camphor burns over the palm , seen mainly in Indian population due to religious practices.[1] We would like to share another interesting case of same aetiology, which is not been reported .

Child abuse and homicidal attack are not an unknown event. Homicidal injury may be associated with psychiatric illness;[2] sometimes, children may become a victim of non-homicidal injury induced by their relatives because of illiteracy or false beliefs. Here, we would like

Figure 1: Camphor burn over the forehead

Figure 2: Scar after the 1st sitting of serial excision

Figure 3: Scar after the 2nd sitting of serial excision

to share a non-homicidal injury inflicted by parents over the forehead of a 1-year-old child in an attempt to treat a seizure disorder, the child was suffering with. We also want to highlight the need of psychosocial therapeutic effort for such victims. Camphor burns of the hand has been described in literature as a self-inflicted non-suicidal injury.[3]

A 6-year-old, female child was brought to us by parents with complaints of a large unsightly scar over the forehead. The child was a known case of seizure disorder since 8 months of age. Detailed history revealed that, according to the religious belief of their society, burning camphor over forehead can cure mental illness.

On examination, a 3.5 cm × 3.5 cm well-defined, circular and healed, hypo-plastic scar over the centre of forehead with hypopigmented patches [Figure 1] was noticed. The surgery was challenging as the scar was located in the centre of forehead with the potential risk of distortion of other subunits. Informed consent was taken, and she was planned for serial excision of the scar. Parents were given psychosocial counselling. The patient had undergone serial excision and significant reduction of scar was noticed after the 1st and 2nd excisions [Figures 2 and 3].

We would like to report this case as no such case report is found on internet search. Such injury has caused a great impact on the child socially, emotionally and cosmetically. Social awareness of such conditions is must to prevent long-term morbidity and possible mortality.

Declaration of patient consent

The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms. In the form the patient(s) has/have given his/her/their consent for his/her/their images and other clinical information to be reported in the journal. The patients understand that their names and initials will not be published and due efforts will be made to conceal their identity, but anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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