

Streaks on the Lower Back

Alexander K.C. Leung, MBBS, FRCPC, FRCP (UK&Irel), FRCPCH, and Andrew Wong, MD

A 13-year-old boy is noted to have horizontal linear streaks on his lower back during a routine physical examination. The streaks are purple in colour and the lesions are asymptomatic. The boy is not on any medication. There is no history of trauma. The rest of the examination is unremarkable. In particular, his weight and height are normal.

What is your diagnosis?

- Dermatitis artefacta
- Striae distensae
- Idiopathic striae atrophicae of puberty
- Larva migrans

Answer

Idiopathic striae atrophicae of puberty (**answer c**) occurs mainly in healthy, nonobese individuals at around puberty in association with adolescent growth spurt. The condition is more common in boys, presumably because boys grow faster than girls at around puberty. Idiopathic striae atrophicae of puberty typically presents as purple, horizontal, linear streaks in the lumbar area. There is no treatment for this condition. Over time, the colour fades and the lesions become atropic and appear silvery.

On the other hand, the lesions of striae distensae occur mainly in areas that are subject to distension, such as the lower abdomen, lateral thighs, buttocks, and, in females, the breasts. Striae distensae occur in association with a

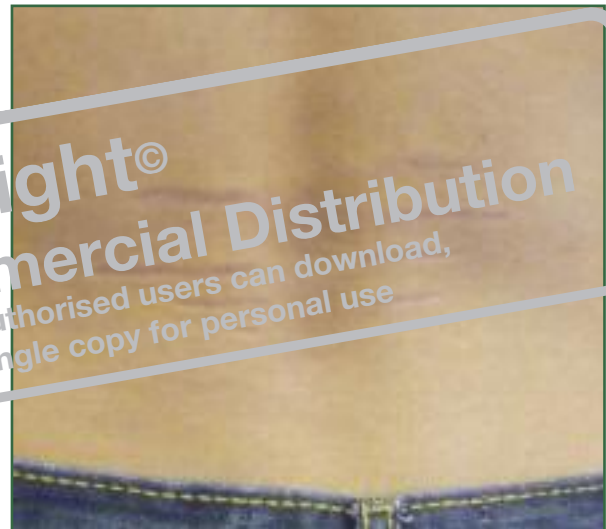


Figure 1: Streaks on the Lower Back

number of conditions, such as obesity, pregnancy, prolonged use of systemic or topical corticosteroids, Cushing syndrome, and Marfan syndrome.

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Alexander K.C. Leung, MBBS, FRCPC, FRCP (UK&Irel), FRCPCH, is a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta.

Andrew Wong, MD, is a Family Practice Resident at the University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta.