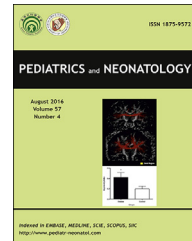


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Congenital syphilis: The irrevocable burden of a late diagnosis

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Congenital syphilis is acquired at any point in pregnancy, and its transmission frequency has been reported to be up to 90%.¹ According to the Institutional Repository for Information Sharing 2015 update, 17,400 cases were reported in 32 countries in America, which is equivalent to a rate of 1.3 cases per 1000 live births.²

Although 60% of neonates are asymptomatic, characteristic early stigmas include rash, failure to thrive, hepatosplenomegaly, periostitis, and rhinitis. Three late stigmas (Hutchinson's triad) occur in 1% of cases and include corneal interstitial keratitis, sensorineural deafness, and "saw" teeth.¹

We present the case of a 1-year-old boy, son of a drug-addicted mother, born by vaginal delivery at 35 gestational weeks without prenatal control. At 2 months of age, he developed a desquamative rash, which was not assessed. At 1 year of age, he requested a medical consultation, in which we identified a right cataract (Fig. 1), Hutchinson's teeth (Fig. 2), both femurs with abduction curvature, and



Figure 1 Congenital cataract in the right eyeball with complete opacity.



Figure 2 Hutchinson's incisive teeth or "saw" teeth.

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Figure 3 Curved left femur in abduction and periostitis of long bones of the lower limbs.

maculopapular lesions on the face and upper extremities. The diagnosis was supported by a positive Anti-*Treponema pallidum* serology on immunochemiluminescence, radiographic alterations in his long bones (Fig. 3), and pleocytosis in the cerebrospinal fluid (35 cells/ μ l). Auditory-evoked potential was normal. He was administered crystalline sodium penicillin G (200,000 IU/kg/day) for 14 days, with a favorable

outcome. A follow-up Venereal Disease Research Laboratory (VDRL) test performed 3 months after discharge was nonreactive. On further evaluation, maternal secondary syphilis was identified with a VDRL test dilution of 1:16. The boy is currently under neurodevelopmental treatment.

Efficient strategies to detect syphilis during pregnancy should be implemented as prenatal control and screening are rare.

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Conflicts of interest

None.

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