

CASE REPORT: CLITORAL HAIR TOURNIQUET SYNDROME IN A 4 YEAR OLD

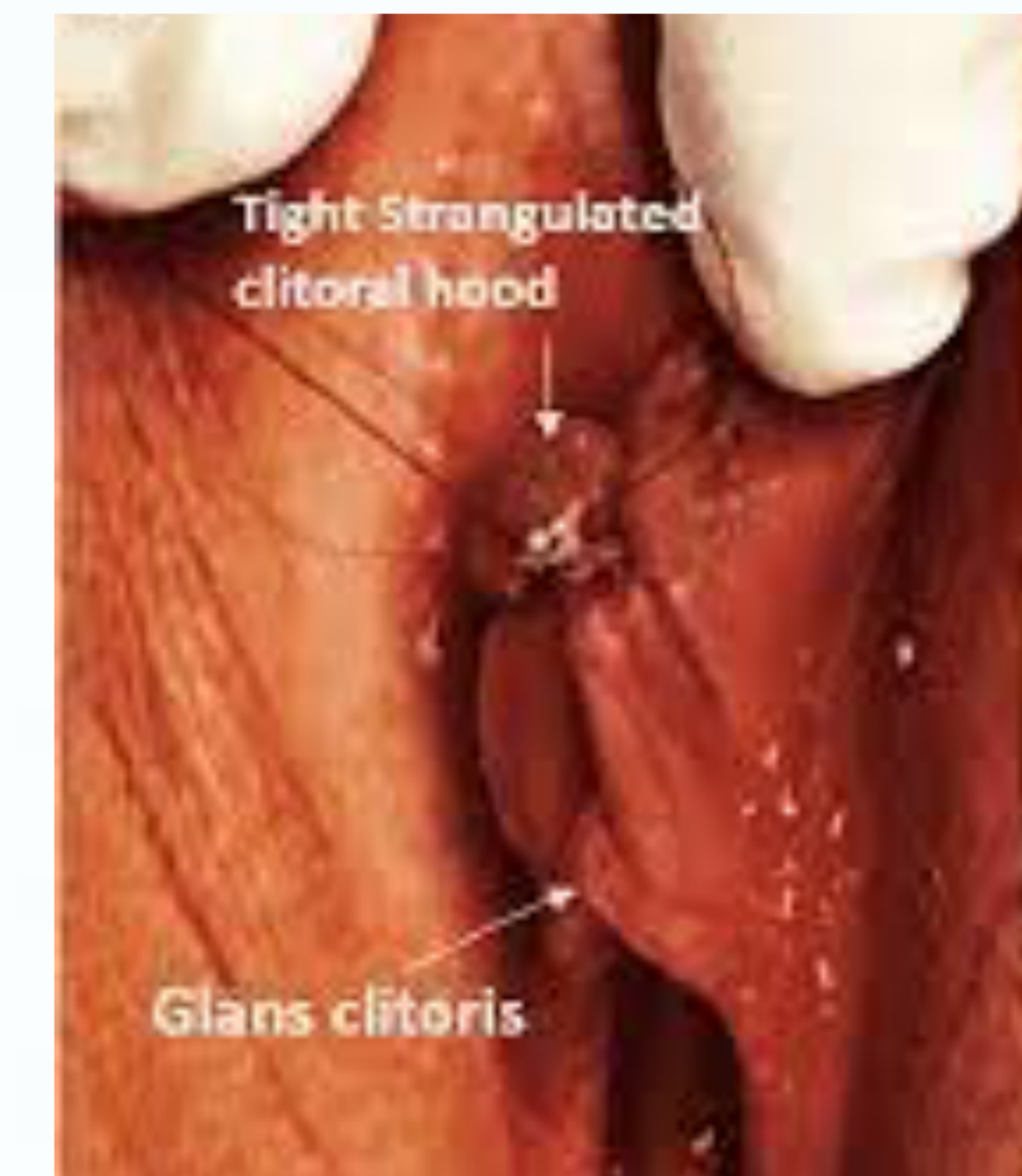


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Introduction

Hair tourniquet syndrome is a clinical phenomenon where hair is wrapped tightly around a body appendage such as a digit, penis, clitoris or nipple, and tightens as the hair strand dries. Complications can include tissue ischemia, necrosis, amputation and loss of function.



At the patient's 6-week review, there was evidence of reperfusion of colour and healing of the clitoral hood. However, the degree of tissue damage and potential future loss of tissue function remain unknown.

Objectives

To report a case of a child with clitoral tourniquet syndrome who may have suffered clitoral ischaemia as a result of prolonged interruption of blood flow to the clitoris.

Discussion

Clitoral hair tourniquet syndrome can affect women of all ages but is reported most commonly in young children. Differential diagnosis includes folliculitis, insect bite, infection, dermatitis, trauma and sexual abuse. The mechanism of injury is lymphatic occlusion and tissue oedema with subsequent arterial flow obstruction and tissue necrosis. The only treatment is timely removal of the tourniquet.

Case

We present a case of a 4-year-old girl who presented with unexplained distress. On full examination, an erythematous discolouration of her clitoris was found which was initially assumed to be the result of an insect bite. Given the failure of recognition, there was a delay in treatment for more than 24 hours from presentation. The patient subsequently was admitted under the paediatric gynaecology service in a tertiary hospital and underwent removal of hair tourniquet under general anaesthesia.

Conclusion

Early diagnosis of clitoral tourniquet syndrome is necessary to prompt treatment by releasing the hair tourniquet to relieve strangulation and allow reperfusion to the tissue. Delay in treatment can lead to loss of tissue function, necrosis or amputation.

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Disclosure

The authors declare no conflict of interests

