

## NAEVUS SPILUS

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Two female patients with congenital naevus spilus are reported. The diagnosis was confirmed by clinical features and histopathology.

**Key Words :** Naevus spilus, Speckled lentiginous naevus

### Introduction

Naevus spilus was redefined by Cohen et al<sup>1</sup> to represent a circumscribed tan macules in which more darkly pigmented raised or flat elements are present. It is usually an acquired lesion, with occasional cases reported as congenital.<sup>2</sup> We herein report what we believe to be the first reported cases of congenital naevus spilus from India.

### Case Report

**Case 1 :** A ten year old female child presented with asymptomatic pigmented lesion (diameter 3 cm) over right nasolabial area since birth. The lesion consisted of a background of tan macular pigmentation, which was studded with small dark brown macules and papules (Fig. 1). No similar lesions were observed anywhere else. Biopsy revealed basilar hyperpigmentation in the light tan area and junctional nests of naevus cells at the base of elongated rete ridges in the dark brown areas (Fig. 2). The diagnosis of naevus spilus was made.

**Case 2 :** An eleven year old female child reported with a larger lesion (diameter 8 cm) of similar morphology as in Case 1, on medial side of right upper



Fig. 1. Numerous small dark macules on a tan background involving right nasolabial area

thigh, since birth (Fig. 3). Histology was consistent with naevus spilus.

None of our patients had a family history of similar lesion.

### Discussion

The term naevus is derived from the Greek (Spilos, "Spot") and implies an anomaly that is spotty. As pointed out by Cohen,<sup>1</sup> naevus spilus was originally described as a uniform macule of hyperpigmentation by Buckley,<sup>3</sup> and Kaposi.<sup>4</sup> Later the term was changed to describe a melanotic macular lesion with dark spots superimposed.<sup>1</sup> A biopsy of the light tan pigmentation reveals an increase in basal layer pigmentation, while histologic examination of the darker macules or papules will show either a junctional or compound naevus. Naevus spilus may represent a localized defect in

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Fig. 2. Basilar hyperpigmentation and nests of naevus cells at the base of elongated rete ridges (H and Ex280)

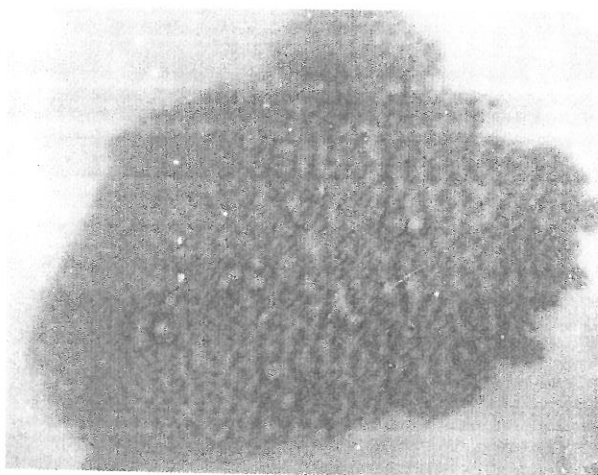


Fig. 3. Naevus spilus on medial side of right upper thigh

neural crest melanoblasts, possibly influenced by genetic and environmental factors.<sup>5</sup> In most cases the naevus spilus is an acquired small solitary lesion with an estimated prevalence rate of 2.3%.<sup>6</sup>

Zosteriform lentiginous naevus and speckled lentiginous naevus are two terms under which large widely distributed naevus spilus has been reported. The varied terminology together with the relative rarity of this clinical presentation have led to confusion in the diagnosis and management of these cases. We agree with the recommendation of Welch and James<sup>7</sup> that a lesion that meets the clinical and histologic criteria outlined above be simply referred to as a naevus spilus, regardless of size, shape, distribution, or extent.

Lastly, we would like to comment on recent literatures pertaining to the development of melanomas in a naevus spilus.<sup>8</sup> Because naevus cells are found in darker macules and papules, the risk for malignant degeneration is present, and the lesions should be monitored accordingly. Prophylactic excision of the entire nevus spilus is not necessary.

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