

## TRICHOTILLOMANIA IN A 2-YEAR-OLD CHILD

Puneet Bhargava, C M Kuldeep, Dinesh Mathur, N K Mathur

A case report of a 2-year-old child with trichotillomania is described.

**Key Words:** Trichotillomania, Hair pulling tics

### Introduction

Forcible extraction of hair is an important but often unrecognized cause of alopecia. A careful history is essential to identify this type of traumatic alopecia. Hair pulling tics or trichotillomania is found in children of both sexes. It is often seen in mentally retarded or normal children between 4-10 years.<sup>1</sup> However some case reports mention it in children as early as 18 months<sup>2</sup> and also in adults. Only a few case reports are available in Indian literature.<sup>3</sup> We describe a 2-year-old female child with trichotillomania.

### Case Report

A 2-year-old female child was brought for complaint of loss of scalp hair occurring for 3 months. Family history suggested that father of the child got service as a driver recently and mother of the child was emotionally upset due to loneliness. The child appeared to be neglected and emotionally inactive and developed the habit of hair pulling tics.

Physical examination evidenced irregular patchy loss of scalp hair on left frontoparietal region (Fig.1) without association with genetic or acquired hair or scalp disorders. Systemic examination revealed no abnormalities. Psychiatric



Fig. 1. Partial alopecia on left frontoparietal region.

analysis was equivocal. Investigations including KOH mount were normal.

### Discussion

Hair pulling tic is a form of nervous tic of pulling the hair and twisting it round the fingers leading to a patch of partial alopecia. Most of the reports in literature have mentioned that conflict free separation and emotional modulation from the mother by young children is not developed in these patients.

Mothers of such children are intensively demanding, ambivalent and inconsistent but fathers are emotionally normal. It impedes

From the Department of Dermatology, SMS Medical College, Jaipur, India.

Address correspondence to : Dr N K Mathur C-24, Peeyush Path, Babu Nagar, Jaipur-302015.

the development of adaptive mechanism in children to release the mental tension, to control the impulses and unresolved anger. Hair pulling becomes one of the pathways for the discharge of tension.

## References

1. Ebling FJG, Dawber R, Rook A. The Hair. In: Rook A, Wilkinson DS, Ebling FJG, eds. Textbook of dermatology. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987 : 1993-4.
  2. Koblenzer CS. Psychologic aspects of skin diseases. In: Fitzpatrick TB, Eisen AZ, Wolf K, et al, eds. Dermatology in general medicine. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993: 22.
  3. Singh G. Emotional traction alopecia. Ind J Dermatol Venereol Leprol 1975; 41: 54-6.
-