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URL of this page: Spondylothoracic dysostosis is a condition characterized by malformation of the bones of the spine and ribs. The bones of the spine (vertebrae) do not develop properly, which causes them to be misshapen and abnormally joined together (fused). The ribs are also fused at the part nearest the spine (posteriorly), which gives the rib cage its characteristic fan-like or "crab" appearance in x-rays. Affected individuals have short, rigid necks and short torsos because of the bone malformations. As a result, people with spondylothoracic dysostosis have short bodies but normal-length arms and legs, called short-trunk dwarfism. The spine and rib abnormalities, which are present from birth, cause other signs and symptoms of spondylothoracic dysostosis. Infants with this condition have small chests that cannot expand adequately, often leading to life-threatening breathing problems. As the lungs expand in the narrow chest, the muscle that separates the abdomen from the chest cavity (the diaphragm) is forced down and the abdomen is pushed out. The increased pressure in the abdomen can cause a soft out-pouching around the lower abdomen (inguinal hernia) or belly-button (umbilical hernia). Breathing problems can be fatal early in life; however, some affected individuals live into adulthood. Spondylothoracic dysostosis is sometimes called spondylocostal dysostosis, a similar condition with abnormalities of the spine and ribs. The two conditions have been grouped in the past, and both are sometimes referred to as Jarcho-Levin syndrome; however, they are now considered distinct conditions. Spondylothoracic dysostosis affects about one in 200,000 people worldwide. However, it is much more common in people of Puerto Rican ancestry, affecting approximately one in 12,000 people. The MESP2 gene provides instructions for a protein that plays a critical role in the development of vertebrae. Specifically, it is involved in separating vertebrae and ribs from one another during early development, a process called somite segmentation. Mutations in the MESP2 gene prevent the production of any protein or lead to the production of an abnormally short, nonfunctional protein. When the MESP2 protein is nonfunctional or absent, somite segmentation does not occur properly, which results in malformation and fusion of the bones of the spine and ribs seen in spondylothoracic dysostosis. This condition is inherited in an autosomal recessive pattern, which means both copies of the gene in each cell have mutations. The parents of an individual with an autosomal recessive condition each carry one copy of the mutated gene, but they typically do not show signs and symptoms of the condition. Jarcho-Levin syndrome STD Berdon WE, Lampl BS, Cornier AS, Ramirez N, Turnpenny PD, Vitale MG, Seimon LP, Cowles RA. Clinical and radiological distinction between spondylothoracic dysostosis (Lavy-Moseley syndrome) and spondylocostal dysostosis (Jarcho-Levin syndrome). *Pediatr Radiol*. 2011 Mar;41(3):384-8. doi: 10.1007/s00247-010-1928-8. Epub 2010 Dec 22. Citation on PubMed Cornier AS, Ramirez N, Arroyo S, Acevedo J, Garcia L, Carlo S, Korf B. Phenotype characterization and natural history of spondylothoracic dysplasia syndrome: a series of 27 new cases. *Am J Med Genet A*. 2004 Jul 15;128A(2):120-6. Citation on PubMed Cornier AS, Staehling-Hampton K, Delventhal KM, Saga Y, Caubet JF, Sasaki N, Ellard S, Young E, Ramirez N, Carlo SE, Torres J, Emans JB, Turnpenny PD, Pourquie O. Mutations in the MESP2 gene cause spondylothoracic dysostosis/Jarcho-Levin syndrome. *Am J Hum Genet*. 2008 Jun;82(6):1334-41. doi: 10.1016/j.ajhg.2008.04.014. Epub 2008 May 15. Citation on PubMed or Free article on PubMed Central Karnes PS, Day D, Berry SA, Pierpont ME. Jarcho-Levin syndrome: four new cases and classification of subtypes. *Am J Med Genet*. 1991 Sep 1;40(3):264-70. Review. Citation on PubMed Morimoto M, Takahashi Y, Endo M, Saga Y. The Mesp2 transcription factor establishes segmental borders by suppressing Notch activity. *Nature*. 2005 May 19;435(7040):354-9. Citation on PubMed Sasaki N, Kiso M, Kitagawa M, Saga Y. The repression of Notch signaling occurs via the destabilization of mastermind-like 1 by Mesp2 and is essential for somitogenesis. *Development*. 2011 Jan;136(1):55-64. doi: 10.1242/dev.055533. Epub 2010 Nov 23. Citation on PubMed Learn how to cite this page Multiple vertebral segmentation defects. Brief report of three patients and nosological considerations. Asian Y, Erduran E, Mocan H, Yildiran A, Okten A, Gedik Y, Asian Y, et al. *Genet Couns*. 1997;8(3):241-8. *Genet Couns*. 1997. PMID: 9327269 Introduction dysostosis spondylothoracic, or Jarcho Levin syndrome, is characterized by a short neck and thorax, a protruding abdomen, abnormal vertebral segmentation and fusion posterior costal resulting in thoracic restriction or respiratory failure and scoliosis. The prevalence is estimated at 1 in 12,000 live births for the people of Puerto Rico and 1 per 200,000 for the rest of the world. It is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner and the only related gene is MESP2. Clinical case Newborn male, who during the first hour of life develops perioral cyanosis, thoracoabdominal dissociation and polypnea, requiring endotracheal intubation and mechanical ventilation for respiratory impairment, finding thoracoabdominal costovertebral abnormalities with an x-ray, and a conditioning restrictive pattern like a crab. During the physical examination, we found horizontal eyelid openings, right atrial appendage, straight nasal bridge, short thorax and asymmetry and hypertrichosis, predominantly in the back. A diagnosis of dysostosis spondylothoracic is confirmed, and the patient was discharged at 7 days of age, with follow up neonatal consultation at high risk. Conclusion In a neonate with respiratory distress syndrome, costovertebral assessment becomes important, with the intention of discarding syndromes associated with defects in the costovertebral segmentation, as Jarcho Levin syndrome, which causes respiratory impairment that can lead to respiratory failure and death. Dysostosis spondylothoracic Introduction Spondylothoracic dysostosis, also known as Jarcho Levin syndrome, is characterized by a short neck and thorax, a protruding abdomen, inguinal and umbilical hernias, abnormal vertebral segmentation and costal fusion resulting in thoracic restriction or respiratory failure, urinary tract anomalies and scoliosis, which is not common, yet it may be severe if it occurs. 1.2 Prevalence in the population of Puerto Rico is estimated at 1 per 12,000 live births. The number is not exact for the rest of the world. However, calculations suggest it occurs in 1 in 200,000 live births. 2. Distinctive radiographic findings include: abnormal segmentation of all vertebral segments with "H-shaped vertebrae" and severe shortening of the spine, especially in the dorsal area. The anteroposterior radiograph displays fan-shaped ribs from the costovertebral base, giving it a "crab-like" aspect. A distinctive characteristic is the "tramline sign", which results from an early prominence in the vertebral pedicles, in contrast to the vertebrae bodies, which do not possess a regular shape. 1-3 Costal and vertebral alterations lead to a significant thoracic restriction in 60% of newborns, resulting in respiratory distress syndrome and requiring immediate medical intervention. Because of the extensive costal fusion, the intercostal muscles are not able to expand the thorax. A pulmonary hypoplasia syndrome is described due to the reduced size of the thorax; however, no intrinsic pulmonary alteration has been described. As a result of the respiratory complication, newborns have a mortality rate of up to 40%. Approximately 90% of patients develop inguinal hernias, bilaterally in 75% of cases. Umbilical hernias occur in 15% of cases; these occur due to the pressure increase in the abdominal cavity as a result of an excessive use of the diaphragm during breathing. 1.3.4 Physical characteristics include a prominent occiput in newborns with a posterior flattening, giving it the appearance of brachycephaly. Posterior hair implantation line is low, with a prominent nose bridge in 33% of cases, a normal philtrum in length and shape, and a high palate in 75% of cases. Cardiac anomalies are rare. Atrial septal defects are the least common malformation, occurring in less than 5% of cases. Other congenital anomalies include clubfoot (1%), cleft palate (>1%), double collecting system (1%) and unilateral glenoid agenesis (0.5%). 1-4 The secondary most important complication is chronic respiratory failure, which is caused by the reduced lung capacity. This may result in pulmonary hypertension and cardiac failure. 5 Case presentation Newborn male, full-term 37.5 weeks of gestation using the Capurro method; his mother, 18 years old and his father 22, apparently healthy, non-blood relatives, without exposure to teratogens, product of a first gestation, with adequate prenatal care, 6 obstetric ultrasounds with no alterations, with 2 episodes of urinary tract infection during the first trimester treated with antibiotic therapy without complications, with iron, folic acid and multivitamin intake starting on the second month of pregnancy. The baby is born in a private clinic, via elective C-section at 37.5 weeks of gestational age, weighing 2780g, with a cephalic perimeter of 35cm and an Apgar score of 8/8. During the first hours of life the baby presents peribuccal cyanosis, thoracoabdominal dissociation and polypnea of 80-90 breaths per minute, a cephalic face mask is placed with fio2 at 100%. The cyanosis and thoracoabdominal dissociation disappeared, reducing fio2 to 60% with the persistency of polypnea; therefore, he is referred to our hospital in his first day of life for diagnosis and management. His physical examination showed horizontal palpebral fissures, right atrial appendage, straight nose bridge, asymmetrical thorax, telethelia, no murmurs, no masses or visceromegaly were found, hypertrichosis mainly on the back, and the presence of intercostal and subcostal retractions and polypnea. Umbilical venous and arterial catheters are placed and a thoracoabdominal radiograph is taken, observing costovertebral alterations which condition the presence of a restrictive pattern, cervical and dorsal hemivertebra, accentuated scoliosis, absence of the 12th right rib and the 11th and 12th left ribs with bilateral asymmetric costal fusion (Figs. 1 and 2). On the third day of life, he presented respiratory clinical deterioration with respiratory acidosis, requiring endotracheal intubation and mechanical ventilation for 24h, accomplishing extubation to a cephalic face mask with an improvement in the respiratory pattern. The oral route is initiated on his fourth day of life, with the mother's breast through an orogastric tube, allowing progress and offering feeding through section with an adequate tolerance. An echocardiogram is performed as part of the approach, finding a small oval foramen and a transfontanelar ultrasound without alterations. Due to findings, during the physical examination and the presence of costovertebral alterations in the thoracoabdominal radiograph, a referral to the Medical Genetics Service is made. They conduct a genetic clinical history and a detailed clinical evaluation of the patient, giving him a diagnosis of spondylothoracic dysostosis. He is admitted to the Neonatal Intermediate Care Unit for maternal training and pediatric orthopedic assessment for the planning of costovertebral alteration management. He is released from the hospital on day 7 of his extrauterine life, with a reassessment of the high-risk and medical genetics neonatal follow-up consultation. Discussion Spondylothoracic dysostosis in its neonatal stage produces respiratory clinical secondary to the presence of a short thorax in up to 65% of newborns, with abnormal vertebral segmentation and posterior costal fusion facilitating the presence of a restrictive breathing pattern capable of causing anything from mild distress to a full uncompensated respiratory acidosis requiring endotracheal intubation and mechanical ventilation, which once initiated, its early removal should be procured. The use of pulmonary surfactant may sometimes be necessary based on neonatal respiratory distress protocols, continuous monitoring of the cardiorespiratory constants and intensive management of infectious diseases. During the early stages of childhood, early detection and management of respiratory infections are of great importance, as well as immunization against respiratory syncytial virus and considering management with bronchodilator-based therapy in patients with intercurrent conditions. 1.2.5 Our patient's respiratory distress syndrome evolved as described by the literature going from mild distress to a respiratory distress requiring endotracheal intubation. However, it is worth noting the importance of costovertebral radiological findings and their integration, as well as the physical examination of Jarcho Levin syndrome. Clinical knowledge of spondylothoracic dysostosis, or Jarcho Levin syndrome, is of great importance, since it usually manifests with a respiratory distress syndrome at birth, frequently leading to pre-term and term newborns being admitted to the hospital. A detailed assessment of the thoracoabdominal radiograph used as an adjunctive initial diagnostic tool in all newborns with respiratory distress provides radiological data which are characteristic of the disease, contributing to its early identification and favoring its optimal treatment and approach. Recognizing these characteristics clearly differentiates it from the rest of the pulmonary diseases coursing with respiratory distress syndrome in newborns. Moreover, knowing the behavior of the disease and its management improves survival and the patient's quality of life during follow-up at the pediatric age. Pediatric surgery and orthopedic assessments are necessary during patient follow-up subsequent to acute event resolution of the surgical planning of scoliosis, costal fusions, inguinal and umbilical hernia 6 though malformation treatment is conservative in most cases, with periodical radiographic controls, physiotherapy and infection control. Regarding the genetic aspect, it is important to take into account several factors, such as a family history, focusing on skeletal dysplasia, consanguinity, Spanish or Puerto Rican lineage, and evaluation of radiological findings in search of costovertebral alterations characteristic of spondylothoracic dysostosis. It is inherited in a recessive autosomal form. The only gene associated with spondylothoracic dysostosis is MESP2. When sequencing the gene, we are able to find 3 mutations: Gly103\*, p.Leu125Val and p.Glu230\*1In this case, since both parents are phenotypically healthy and there is no other family history, we are able to infer the risk of recurrence for the parents based on the fact that they carry a heterozygous mutation (that is, they present only one mutant allele). Thus, for every pregnancy, they would have a 25% chance of having an affected baby, a 50% chance for them to be asymptomatic carriers just like their parents, and a 25% chance of being healthy. The patient's children will inevitably be asymptomatic carriers (in case they had children with a healthy person). It is worth noting that a molecular study was not conducted in this particular case due to the parents' economic situation. Prenatal diagnosis in high-risk pregnancies may be given to the couple in the form of a mutation analysis when it is already known, by amniocentesis or chorionic villus sampling (weeks 10-12). Another available option is preimplantation genetic diagnosis. 2.7 It is generally possible to find segmentation and vertebral formation defects in the ultrasound of the second trimester of pregnancy, which may cause suspicion based on the findings of spondylothoracic dysostosis. 2.7 It is vital for pediatricians and neonatologists to know the less frequent pathologies in newborns which course with respiratory distress syndrome, such as spondylothoracic dysostosis, since the lack of ability or skill to recognize as well as to integrate radiological data and physical examination may result in a late detection of the illness, thus reducing the survival rate in these types of patients. Assessment by different specialties is of great value, as conducted in this case with the medical genetics service, which may help reaching a timely diagnosis. Conflict of interest The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.



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